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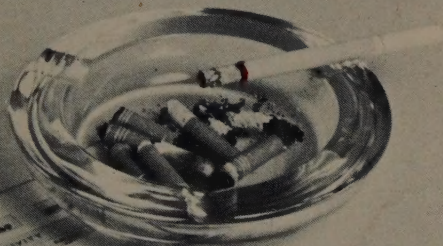
Personal Case Histories
by the author of
SURVIVAL IN THE EXECUTIVE JUNGLE

EXECUTIVES UNDER FIRE

Chester Burger

"Better than any novel written in the last 10 years, it offers a fascinating view of the pressure-cooker world of the executive in America today."

—Chicago Tribune



Executives Under Fire

Personal case histories
from the executive ranks

L. CHRISTEN BERGER

FOURTH EDITION

WILLIAM W. BAKER & CO., INC.

EXECUTIVES UNDER FIRE

Personal case histories
from the executive jungle

by ***CHESTER BURGER***

COLLIER BOOKS

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Introduction

THE inner reality of executive life which appears in this book is the result of several hundred informal interviews which I conducted in New York and other cities. Several dozen of these interviews were tape recorded with the knowledge and cooperation of the executives. They are presented exactly as they took place, with the following exceptions:

1. To protect the anonymity of those who cooperated, I have made substantial changes to prevent identification of the actual company where the events occurred. If you think you can guess the company, you're probably wrong.

2. All names and locations have similarly been changed. All names are fictitious, and any similarity or resemblance to those of living persons is purely coincidental.

3. To maintain interest, I have eliminated repetition and unnecessary detail. The recorded interviews averaged two hours in length, and each unedited transcript approximated 12,000 words as we covered and recovered the experiences of a working lifetime. None of the essential facts have been omitted in the editing.

4. In one case where recording was impossible, I reconstructed the executive's story immediately after the interview in an effort to recapture his own words accurately.

With these exceptions, you are reading these experiences exactly as they were told to me. They typify the experiences of most of the executives with whom I talked.

To those who took the time to share their experiences

with others, I am deeply grateful. And to my secretary, Mrs. Carolyn Flaherty, who painstakingly transcribed their recordings down to the last "uh" and "ah," my appreciation for her apparently unlimited patience.

CHESTER BURGER

CHAPTER I

The Absolute Ego

WHY do you find it so difficult to get along with your boss?

What's wrong with you anyway? Why do you always get into trouble on the job when other executives seem to operate smoothly?

The answer is that nothing may be wrong with you, except perhaps that you haven't learned all the skills and techniques of handling yourself when the boss gets difficult.

Hundreds of executives in corporations all over the country have told me their stories. And almost invariably, they were surprised when I told them that their problems were not unique. They found it difficult to believe that many others had suffered, endured, and often triumphed in similar circumstances.

Conflicts at the executive level rarely break out into the open. Those involved seal their lips to avoid embarrassment and damage to their careers. You may be one of them. You may find it difficult to believe that right now, in other corporate headquarters, other executives like yourself are struggling with these same problems.

But occasionally, a situation erupts into public attention, baring the stormy stories of top corporation executives and the jungles they have created under them. Before we listen to the stories of anonymous executives, let's look at a few executive czars whose performances have burst into the public record.

Let's start with Robert Moses, creator of the half-billion

dollar New York World's Fair. The magnitude of his successes and the depths of his failures have few parallels in American business life. Robert Moses' very name conjures up the image of a godlike figure standing atop the mountain, deigning to pass orders and policies in a steady stream to ordinary mortals down below.

When people didn't come to Robert Moses' World's Fair in sufficient numbers; when a \$35,000,000 projected surplus turned into a \$17,000,000 deficit; when things ran into deep trouble, Moses acted fast.

He acted not to solve the World's Fair's problems but to push them away as if they didn't exist. Perhaps he felt that if he didn't know about the problems, they would go away and not bother him any more. Robert Moses needed success, not problems or failures.

Life magazine* reported what happened at the close of the 1964 season when Moses' financial methods, or lack of them, had incurred expenses more than twice as high as Moses' own advance estimates:

Only a few highly placed Fair officials, apparently, had any realization of what was happening. One who did was George Spargo, an old friend of Moses and active in several Moses authorities, who was head of the Fair's finance committee. In June, without telling the rest of the committee, he wrote to Moses arguing that expenses were getting out of hand and protesting the hasty loans that were being made to concessionaires. Moses fired Spargo on the spot, announcing to the press that he had accepted George Spargo's resignation for "personal" reasons "with great regret." To associates, Moses said: "We don't want any negative thinking around here."

The message was not lost on the rest of the Moses Family. As things went quietly from bad to worse, as bills piled up and attendance stayed below estimates, everyone on Moses' staff nervously looked the other way. Daily attendance figures given to the press were consistently inflated. "You've got to remember," says a Fair official who is not a member of the Family, "that everyone out there was scared to death. Moses *made* all those people and he can destroy them. He doesn't want to hear that *his* Fair is going badly. He's always regarded criticism, however constructive or well meant, as a personal attack. All

* *Life*, May 14, 1965.

he wants to hear is 'Yes, R. M.' The result was that his own people allowed him to live for months in a fool's paradise."

Before he took on the World's Fair assignment, Robert Moses had earned a justified reputation as the great master builder of all time. He personally directed the construction of almost every tunnel, bridge, park, and parkway in New York City. He spent some \$5,000,000,000 to do so. He produced results. When the New York World's Fair Corporation needed someone to turn a grandiose dream into solid reality, they knew Robert Moses was their man. In 1960, at the age of 71, he got the job.

Moses raised the money, planned magnificently, built the Fair, and opened it on time. It was the biggest and finest World's Fair in history. To accomplish his miracles, Moses had surrounded himself with trusted aides who had accompanied him from job to job and from year to year.

But when they brought him bad news, they had to go—quickly. George Spargo was not the first. Later, however, Moses made his peace with Spargo and turned his wrath on others. One target was Erwin Witt, for 30 years Moses' accountant and controller for the Triborough Bridge and Tunnel Authority. After Witt prepared a financial report on the actual state of affairs, Moses called him on the carpet, berated him for two hours, and then attempted to fire him. Witt wasn't fired. Within a couple of months, he was dead after heart surgery.

And when banker George Moore, later chairman of the Fair's finance committee, demanded vital records, Moses' reply was, "If you don't like it, you can get the hell out. You're an s.o.b."* Moore got out. Not 76-year-old Robert Moses.

Such was the personality of the man who went from success to success until his penultimate failure. Such was the iron will that intimidated, bullied, and browbeat lesser mortals. This same iron will had made Robert Moses master of the art of domination. Now he would allow no one to stand in his way, not even bankers and public officials who

* *Ibid.*

had entrusted to his care millions of dollars of other people's money.

Sewell Avery, the late president of Montgomery Ward & Co., was another bird of the same stripe. In his heyday, Sewell Avery had turned his company from a loss position of almost \$6,000,000 in one year to a profit of \$74,000,000 at his peak. He could do no wrong.

During those years of his unchallenged power, Sewell Avery never left any doubts in anyone's mind as to who was the boss. "If anyone ventures to differ with me, I throw them out the window," said he, more in truth than in jest. So many of his executives were "thrown out the window" (or quit before they could be propelled bodily) that they staffed the top echelons of Ward's competitors for many years. As for his own company, run by Avery and Avery alone, by the end of his career Montgomery Ward had slipped badly behind its competitor Sears, Roebuck.

But while the going is good and the lines are rising on the sales charts success breeds success. The confidence of such a man in the wisdom of his own decisions grows daily. Is he making the right decision this time? How can it be otherwise? Was he not right last time, and the time before that? Soon he comes to believe that his judgment is infallible. Then there is no stopping him, for his inner insecurities are submerged by a titanic wave of self-confidence, however brittle it may be.

Perhaps that is also the story of "Jungle Jim" Aubrey, president of the CBS Television Network, who reigned as king for four years. James Thomas Aubrey, Jr., was a Princeton graduate *cum laude*. He had been a magazine advertising salesman and then an advertising account executive. He had succeeded in both posts and had rapidly moved into and up the broadcasting hierarchy.

At CBS, Aubrey demonstrated smart business judgment and remarkable ability to pick the winners, the television programs that Americans would watch by the millions. One after another he picked successes, some when they were hardly more than an idea in the mind of a writer. Other shows he dropped with equal vigor and acumen. No star was too big to fall under the blows of the Aubrey

ax if the Nielsen ratings slipped. Jack Benny, Danny Kaye, Alfred Hitchcock, Judy Garland were all cast aside by Jim Aubrey.

And "Jungle Jim" did it with a smile. Matter-of-factly. No emotion. He played it cool. Kept his mouth shut. Never gave interviews; in fact, wouldn't talk to the press.

The ratings on Jim Aubrey's shows went up. The advertisers renewed. And CBS prospered. The network, in turn, treated Jim Aubrey well. One year he earned almost a quarter of a million dollars in salary and bonus. Not bad for a man who got his CBS job at the age of 41 and was *kaput* by the age of 45.

The network also gave Jim Aubrey the power he wanted. That power was unlimited. His word was law. The advertising agencies either took what he offered or stayed off the network.

He wanted full control of all programs, and he received it. No script could enter production until Jim Aubrey had personally approved it. If he thought a new title was needed, the program was immediately retitled. If he didn't like a scene, the scene would be reshot, and damn the expense.

So long as the ratings climbed along with the ensuing profits, Jim Aubrey was *rex et imperator*. But then one day, having convinced himself that as king he could do no wrong, he overreached himself.

Jim Aubrey had a buddy. His buddy's name was Keefe Brasselle. *TV Guide* magazine* identified Brasselle simply as "an unsuccessful ham." It seems that buddy Brasselle had some ideas for new TV programs.

When it came to buddy Brasselle's shows, somehow Jim Aubrey's usual cold and cautious judgment disappeared. Ordinarily, he insisted on a pilot, or sample, program before reaching a decision. But when it came to buddy Brasselle's shows, no pilots were ever made. Aubrey decided all three shows were good enough to broadcast, and he put them on the network.

The shows, again quoting the same article in *TV Guide*, were "all awful." They flopped. Soon thereafter, Jim Au-

* April 3-9, 1965.

brey was fired, a victim of his own supreme arrogance and his belief in his own infallibility. While dismissal of the average executive rarely rates a three-line mention in his industrial trade paper, Jim Aubrey's demise from his presidential post was headlined from New York to Australia.

Why CBS chose to fire him suddenly on a weekend has never been revealed officially, but the reason didn't make too much difference; the important thing was that The King was dead. When Jim Aubrey left his private executive suite for the last time, he said not a public word and disappeared quietly into the shadows of his luxurious life. Never once did he defend his judgment or misjudgments.

Often, however, the tycoon who has overreached himself protests his innocence down to the last gulp. It was others, not he, who made the errors. How could he admit that he had erred? Were he to do so, even to himself as he looked in his morning shaving mirror, his whole personality house-of-cards might collapse. So it's always the other guy's fault.

Look at Anthony De Angelis, formerly president of the Allied Crude Vegetable Oil Refining Corporation. Tino De Angelis was at the center of the giant salad oil swindle in which his creditors lost the unbelievable sum of \$150,000,000. It was probably the biggest corporate fraud in American business history. Some of Tino De Angelis' creditors themselves went bankrupt when they discovered that \$150,000,000 worth of salad oil they thought they owned didn't even exist in Tino's tanks where he said it was.

Tino pleaded guilty to federal charges of fraud and conspiracy. But he told the court that "some companies or individuals" that "made" the \$30,000,000 he lost in his final months "should be here in court, and not I."

Why had he done it? How had it happened? Was it an error of his business judgment? Listen to Tino De Angelis' own words to the court:

"In my great ambition to keep my business going and pay all of my creditors, I permitted myself to be overcome to the point where, in days of desperation, I transgressed beyond the limits of the law."

It takes a very special man to swindle investors and creditors out of \$150,000,000, and Tino De Angelis was a very special man. The federal judge who sentenced him was very much impressed.

"You yourself, Mr. De Angelis, have exemplified what can be achieved [under the American system of free enterprise] with only a little backing or influence, by courage and vision."

And Tino's lawyer reinforced the picture by describing Tino as a man with a "burning ambition" and a "great desire to build up a great business."

The sympathetic judge told the courtroom he still didn't understand De Angelis' motivation. Perhaps the jurist was treading on hazardous ground. One can properly ask whether Tino's motivation differed from that of other top executives who build corporate empires to satisfy their "burning ambitions." De Angelis differed only in that he resorted to fraud, as he himself confessed. Most executives would draw the line at what Tino quaintly called "transgressing beyond the limits of the law."

Tino wasn't motivated primarily by the desire for money. The bankruptcy left him penniless. What Tino wanted was glory, the sweet smell of success. He wanted to be, and he became, an industrial potentate. He was listened to in Wall Street. But modest success wasn't enough; his ego needed more. When the time came that success could be assured only by fraud, he crossed the line into illegality.

These are the marks of a man for whom no price was too high to pay for success. One can only wonder, as did the federal judge, about the depths of his compulsive motivation to succeed. Even after his conviction, Tino De Angelis still felt a burning desire to succeed. A reporter asked him whether he wanted to start a new business after his release from prison. "Yes," Tino replied, "with the help of God."

It was just as if nothing had ever gone wrong.

William Zeckendorf was another corporate executive who felt the burning drive for success, until his company, too, ended in the courts.

The bankruptcy of Webb & Knapp, Inc., once a \$300,000,000 real estate empire, rang down the curtains on Zeckendorf, at least temporarily. It was only a "normal" business failure. No fraud or improper activities of any kind were alleged. But Bill Zeckendorf's career, while it lasted, was a veritable prototype of the dreams of uncounted thousands of lesser men. Zeckendorf fulfilled those dreams almost to the point of the grotesque. His career encompassed a quarter of a century from beginning to summit to nadir.

By the time he was finished, William Zeckendorf had run up losses of \$32,000,000 for his corporation. His Webb & Knapp stock, which once sold for \$4.50 a share, could be had for 12¢, with few takers. Thousands of investors had been wiped out. Hundreds of employees and executives had been dismissed, because there was no money to pay their salaries. But Bill Zeckendorf was still hopeful, outwardly anyway. Until the court acted, he would not hear talk of retirement. He was known to believe that if given time, he could still pull a rabbit out of the hat and save his company singlehandedly. Making hundreds of phone calls daily (using six telephones to do it), receiving dozens of bankers and businessmen, entertaining uncounted numbers at his superb luncheon and dinner table, William Zeckendorf to the very end hardly presented a picture of failure.

What kind of a man is William Zeckendorf?

First of all, he is brilliant and able. He attained his wealth and his power without benefit of family inheritance or connections. Born in a mere hamlet in the east-central part of Illinois, Zeckendorf came to New York and entered, but never was graduated from, New York University. He quit college at age 20 to take a \$25-a-week job managing an office building owned by a relative. Considering the responsibility involved, it was hardly a generous stipend, even for one so young.

But Bill Zeckendorf picked up the ball and ran with it. Vigorously, strenuously, he went about the task of attracting new tenants, and he succeeded brilliantly. From this

job he moved up to a real estate brokerage firm where he spent 14 years learning, sharpening his skills and his negotiating ability. All the while he made friends. Then in 1938 he was hired as vice-president of Webb & Knapp, Inc., a well-established, traditional old New York firm. Four years and 150 deals later, his success was firmly established; he had won a reputation as a "comer" in the real estate field.

Nobody, not even the most anguished creditor of Webb & Knapp, ever accused Zeckendorf of a lack of ability or imagination. Zeckendorf could look at a piece of marginal land, envision a great municipal center in its stead, and convince someone of the plausibility of his idea. And he could convince them to finance it, usually aided by a minimum of Webb & Knapp's own money.

Sometimes there were delays and sometimes the projects never got off the ground, but usually Bill Zeckendorf delivered results. Most of his plans were carried out, and most were successful and profitable.

They were bold and daring plans because Bill Zeckendorf thought big. Who else but a big thinker could look at the old meat packing plants on New York's East Side and envision in their place a world capital? Bill Zeckendorf did; he convinced John D. Rockefeller, Jr., to buy his site and present it free to the United Nations. Who else but a big thinker could envision transforming downtown Denver? Or look at old Roosevelt Field on Long Island, not as a site for thousands of small homes (as others had seen it), but as a location for the world's largest shopping center?

You have to think big, and Bill Zeckendorf thought very big.

Bill Zeckendorf also radiated supreme self-confidence. Most successful executives are supremely self-confident, but Zeckendorf outdid them in the confidence department. Even as his fortunes were sagging, he continued his daily routine. His Cadillac limousine, bearing the self-important license plate WZ-1, bore him regally around Manhattan from deal to deal, from office to office.

Whether he had one or two telephones in his car is not known, but an apocryphal story made the rounds that a business friend of Zeckendorf's one day telephoned him in his car.

"Say, Bill, I've just had a telephone like yours installed in my car," the friend said. "I'm driving down Park Avenue and phoning you from the car."

"Just a minute," reportedly said Zeckendorf, "you reached me in *my* car. I'm on the East River Drive. Can you hold on a minute? My other phone is ringing."

Bill Zeckendorf, the prototype of the successful executive, was a hard worker. No doubt about that. Day and night he worked, almost from the moment he arose before dawn.

And honest he was; no doubt about that. His creditors, his associates, his bankers confirm that Zeckendorf never shirked a financial responsibility or hid behind a legality. Many times he placed his personal assets on the line to back a company obligation. But in the end, he failed. And when he did, his personal reaction was also archetypical.

He wouldn't admit defeat. He wouldn't quit. To step out gracefully, he discreetly sought a presidential appointment to the cabinet, no less, in charge of urban affairs. (No such department existed at the time.) *Life* magazine quoted him,* "It's not dishonorable to get knocked down. But to quit when you still have strength left is immoral."

Why, with such talents and abilities, did Bill Zeckendorf fail? There is no simple answer, but there are clues. And the clues suggest that his personality influenced his business judgments until it brought his downfall.

You can't explain it by a greed for money, for Zeckendorf's associates testified that the complicated deal, rather than the most profitable deal, interested him. Even his record of philanthropy was unusually generous.

One can guess that Zeckendorf was a man inwardly unsure of himself. Else why the zest for personal publicity? Why the limousines, the vast personal estate, the hovering retainers? An ordinary profitable deal was not enough to silence the inwardly gnawing feeling of uncertainty. It

* *Life*, February 12, 1965.

had to be the big deal, the biggest deal, the miracle deal, the deal that lawyers and bankers alike said couldn't be made. Perhaps all of his business career, Bill Zeckendorf was trying to prove to himself that he really was good.

When his great ability produced success early in the game, Zeckendorf found assurance and became even bolder. Now one building was no longer enough; it had to be an entire neighborhood, or even an entire city (Century City in Los Angeles). As one success followed another, there soon came to be no limit to his dreams. Soon, perhaps, William Zeckendorf came to feel himself a divine instrument, or at least divinely inspired, until he had convinced himself he could not fail. And forgetting that he was a mortal man, he overreached himself.

There was no one to say no. "No" men were negative thinkers. Bill Zeckendorf wanted no negative thinkers. *Life* magazine* put it succinctly:

Some of Webb & Knapp's officers saw peril ahead through the atmosphere of heady exhilaration, but they were afraid to speak out and contradict the boss, and a number of them eventually resigned. Says one banker, "If Zeckendorf had had a really tough executive vice president—a real s.o.b. instead of a bunch of tame cats—things would have been a lot different."

There is good reason to review Bill Zeckendorf's business career, because only in the degree of his ability and his success does he differ from ten thousand corporate executives down the line in a thousand corporations.

It happens even in the military. It happened with General Douglas MacArthur, perhaps the greatest military commander our nation has known in a century.

General MacArthur valiantly defended Bataan and Corregidor. Recovering from defeat, he successfully led the American forces on the road back to victory. He reconquered the Philippines. His strategic daring won the admiration and professional respect of his military colleagues and foes alike. His statesmanlike occupation policies engendered profound changes in Japan.

* *Ibid.*

But General MacArthur's brilliant career ended in failure. Twice he failed: the first time when his armies were thrown back in hasty retreat during the Korean War; and the second time when he was summarily dismissed for insubordination by President Truman.

The reasons for those failures are complex, originating in a web of political and military circumstances. But General MacArthur explained those failures by blaming everyone but himself. MacArthur's villains were his superiors and other officers beyond his control.

The general unburdened himself in two remarkably candid interviews which he granted ten years before his death. The conversations were off-the-record, and they would have been lost to posterity had not journalists Bob Considine of the Hearst Headline Service and Jim Lucas of the Scripps-Howard Newspapers written detailed reports, to be locked in their files until after the general's death.

One by one, he tore apart his former colleagues. Of General Maxwell Taylor, he recalled that Taylor had been a mere cadet when he, MacArthur, was superintendent of the United States Military Academy at West Point. Taylor, he said, was "a careful and extremely ambitious young man" who would never do anything to jeopardize his career and "will never make a move without contacting higher echelons."

For General John E. Hull, army vice chief of staff, MacArthur could express only "pity, tinged with contempt."

General Matthew Ridgeway, MacArthur described as a "chameleon," and "flip-flop" artist.

MacArthur blamed General George C. Marshall, war-time chief of staff, for allocating an "infinitesimal" portion of the nation's war effort to his Pacific campaigns.

He blamed the State Department for "our loss of Asia," ascribing the failure to the "Anglo-Saxonphiles" in the department.

And he blamed the Department of Defense for reducing the chiefs of staff to what he called "press agents, pretty boys, speech makers and front men."

General MacArthur spoke bitterly of President Truman, the man who fired him. He called him a "man of raw courage and guts. . . . The little bastard honestly believes he is a patriot." He called President Truman "a gutter fighter . . . and you've got to admire him."

What did MacArthur think of President Eisenhower, who as a major in the Philippines had served him years before? Jim Lucas quotes MacArthur: "He was extremely bitter toward Eisenhower, whom he referred to several times as 'once a man of integrity.' "

After Eisenhower's election to the White House, General MacArthur presented his ideas to the president-elect for an hour and fifteen minutes. When, according to MacArthur's version, Secretary of State John Foster Dulles poured cold water on his ideas, the general put his hands on Eisenhower's shoulders and said, "You and I have soldiered together a long, long time. We've had our ups and downs. I've made my share of mistakes, and you've made yours. I have from the start felt toward you the affection of an older brother for his junior." It is not difficult to sense his mood of self-righteousness and arrogant condescension toward the President of the United States.

The monumental self-assurance which General MacArthur nurtured throughout his military career was an essential part of his personality. Not despite this quality, but because of it, did MacArthur rise to supreme military command. It is the same quality possessed by the successful executive. The man who wishes to command others cannot sap his strength with inner doubts of his own ability. If he doubts himself, he must push those doubts deep down into his subconscious. He thinks they are hidden, if indeed he knows that they are there at all.

The 41-year-old chairman of the McCrory Corporation, Meshulam Riklis by name, falls into this category. Interviewed by a *New York Times* reporter after a successful year in which he doubled his company's earnings, Riklis said, "I'm not sensitive about other things, but I am very sensitive about business."

Riklis had a lot to be sensitive about. In only 14 years'

time, he had moved from a \$200-a-month job as a part-time securities analyst in Minneapolis to the command of one of America's leading retail chains with sales of over \$500,000,000 a year. In between, there was a roller coaster series of ups and downs, but on one of his rebounds, Riklis was boldly considering whether to spend \$50,000,000 to \$100,000,000 cash to acquire still another company.

When the newspapers reported Riklis' current activities, they customarily added background information on his career. Invariably they mentioned his defeats along with his victories. Life is full of defeats as well as victories for all of us, as a realistic man knows. But the man who can accept setbacks is not the man who gains control of vast corporate empires. Meshulam Riklis is not such a man.

The New York Times reported that Mr. Riklis "remembers just about everything that has been written about his business in the last two years and who wrote it." At one press conference, Riklis demanded to know why the newsmen mentioned one of his defeats in their stories. He thought it was a dead issue and unfair.

And reporter Ed Gold, of Fairchild News Service, confirmed* the portrait of Mr. Riklis:

He has never claimed to be a journalist but he has a good idea how stories should be written and how reporters and editors ought to behave.

He retains much of what the press says about him, keeps a mental card file on reports and reporters, and doesn't understand—or appreciate—background stories that dwell on less attractive periods in his financial history.

You might think that a man so supersensitive to criticism would show his insecurity transparently. But "Rik" Riklis covers his with an overwhelming egotism. One colleague said that egotism was "a total description of his personality." Gold added: †

He is truly the only important stockholder in his personal brain trusts. And if he has lost faith in many of his properties over the past decade, as well as many of his associates, he has

* Reprinted from an article by Ed Gold in *Home Furnishings Daily*, March 22, 1965. Copyright 1965, Fairchild Publications, Inc.

† *Ibid.*

retained a solid confidence in one former financial prodigy—named Meshulam Riklis.

Mr. Riklis' ego has been both his boon and his bane. It has sustained him through fairly long periods of financial drought. . . . It has also apparently convinced him that financial wizardry was enough to turn sickly properties . . . into healthy and profitable operations.

Meshulam Riklis is a financial genius, as many objective observers have noted. But he is a mortal. And mortals sometimes err. However, the man who must constantly accomplish miracles to prove himself can never admit that he makes mistakes, any more than did Robert Moses, Sewell Avery, Jim Aubrey, Tino De Angelis, William Zeckendorf, or Douglas MacArthur. Neither did "Rik" Riklis.

Commented Ed Gold:*

Fact is he never blames his own judgment, or lack of it, for setbacks. He has been known to blame "poor timing," the frailties of advisors, acts of God (bad weather), unknown forces ("I just don't know"), and the Fourth Estate.

Everybody but himself.

Nobody has questioned Riklis' great ability, or his honesty, but they have questioned his infallibility. The driving executive can't have that.

Common threads run through the careers of these successful executives.

They were all able, extraordinarily talented men.

They relied on nothing but their own ability to win success. Friends and family connections were insignificant factors.

They produced results. They were winners. They did not merely talk a good game. They could point to tangible, measurable accomplishments.

They were hard workers. Success did not come easy to them. Their working habits inspired awe among their associates. With their boundless energy, they generated sufficient work to require large and competent staffs to execute their plans.

* *Ibid.*

They, not their associates or subordinates, won the victories. Their staffs were composed of technicians and craftsmen, not dreamers and builders. So when a subordinate suggested caution or changes in plans, it was possible to dismiss his suggestions with sneering contempt. "What did *you* ever accomplish? I made you, and I can break you." Usually, the tycoons were absolutely right.

They were compulsively driven men. We can only guess that their superhuman drives originated from deep inner self-doubts about their own worth and their own ability.

It is a rare human being who feels the inner strength to be able to take criticism, to accept failure, and to learn from it. These were not such men.

For the business community and for government as well, their careers raise another problem. Where did the "checks and balances" fail? Why did not boards of directors, bankers, or elected officials curb their autocratic power in time to prevent damage? Partly, of course, it was the greed of others who allowed free rein to the tycoons as long as everything looked rosy and they themselves were benefiting.

But equally probable, those directors, bankers, and public officials were themselves cowed and intimidated. They themselves were successful, powerful, hard-driving men, but in Robert Moses *et al.*, they had met their masters.

The Zeckendorfs, the Aubreys, and the MacArthurs of this world are many. Their lesser counterparts may be found in almost every corporation and organization in the country. One of them may be your boss.

You may be spending your tormented days working for such a man, trying to understand him, trying to satisfy his whims and caprices. Trying to hold your well-paying job and perform useful work while you survive in the executive jungle.

It can be done. The testimony of thousands of successful executives confirms it. But it is not easy. Many executives have learned how to do it but almost always the hard way, by bitter personal experience. This book is the story of their experiences, as they told them to me.

CHAPTER 2

Unholy Alliance

JOHN SLATE had promised to tell me his story whenever I came to his city. He was vice-president and general sales manager of a huge food company which has won leadership with its "convenience foods." Although we previously had never met, his correspondence had led me to expect a rather turbulent, emotional character who was in imminent danger of losing his job. He had written me for several months, describing his travail and asking for counsel.

Finally, one afternoon I flew out to see him. After checking in at a downtown hotel, I took a taxi out to his suburban home to have dinner with him and to hear his story. John Slate was highly nervous, giving the impression of an executive who had endured more than his share of problems and who wanted no more. I had more than a strong suspicion that John caused many of those problems himself and that he himself was responsible for his impending downfall. As if to confirm my initial prejudgment, he began immediately with a show of hostility to the president:

I tell you, this man irritates me. It's all I can do to stand him. He runs this company with an iron hand. Today, I had a 12 o'clock luncheon date with one of our big institutional customers. I was leaving the office to meet him at the restaurant—it was just ten minutes to 12—when the president called me and wanted me to go to lunch with him.

I said, "I've got a date with Harold Newman." He said, "Damn it, break the date." I told him I couldn't. It was too late. There wasn't any way I could even contact Newman.

He said, "I don't care. Break it. You're having lunch with me." That was it. Bang. He slammed down the telephone. I get this kind of treatment time and again. It's the most embarrassing thing.

So I had to do something. I asked my secretary to find Newman in the restaurant and apologize that I couldn't have lunch with him. What else could I do?

Then I went out with the president. Let me tell you about this man. He's worth \$15,000,000. He doesn't give a damn about anyone. He doesn't care about anything. He has no use for anyone. He is conceited, self-centered, selfish, sadistic. He's the most sadistic individual I ever met.

He didn't waste time with preliminaries. He started talking right away. "I'm very disappointed in you," he told me. "I don't like our sales picture at all. You're doing a lousy job."

Then he started asking about my out-of-town trip. What was I doing, and why hadn't I cleared it with him first? I told him that our regional sales manager had been having problems and I had to go out and straighten them out.

I hired the manager. I'm the guy that hires 'em, and I'm the guy that fires 'em. This man reports to me. He had a problem and it was my responsibility to solve it.

I told the president there was confusion in the ranks. The salesmen have been fighting among themselves. So that's the reason I made the trip, to get things straightened out.

He was angry because I hadn't told him I was going. "Well," I said to the boss, "this is the only way I can run my job. I'm either running it or not." Once when I asked his permission to make a trip, he said, "What are you wasting the company's money for?" I never again asked him. I was always out-positioned. I finally took the attitude I'm going to do it when I think it's necessary.

He gave me holy hell. He said, "How many carloads did you sell out there?" What I did was to go out there and

fire two salesmen. One has been with the company for 11 years. I told the president that the reason I fired one of the men was because I've been getting only half his potential out of him.

He said, "How do you figure that?" I said, "Because of the size and growth of the market. In my judgment, he should be selling twice as much." He told me I was taking an arbitrary attitude. This boy was a favorite of his.

But he couldn't do anything. The boy was out. He ripped hell out of me. He told me I should have gotten permission from the executive vice-president to do this thing.

I sat and listened to him. Finally I said, "May I make a statement, B.G.?" He'll only let certain people call him "B.G." I said, "Damn it, as long as I'm general sales manager, I've got the responsibility and I'm going to run things. Unless we understand this, I'm not your boy. You and I know that the only way you get action is by doing it. When I make mistakes in judgment, tell me about it. But tell me alone, just like you're doing now. Because I disagree with you." You know, I've always disagreed with this man since the first day I was hired. Can I tell you the story?

I had just been hired to manage sales for one division. When I arrived in the office, I walked in and saw my predecessor still sitting behind the desk. There was no desk for me. There wasn't even a chair. The guy pointed to a bench against the wall and said, "You can work there." Mind you, I was the new sales manager of the division. B.G. had told him so. He was awaiting reassignment to a new job. Despite that, he acted as if he had never been told anything. He kept right on at the job. He never talked to me. He just let me sit.

I figured that sooner or later, probably on Friday afternoon, he would get up and leave, but he never did. I stood it for a week, and then on Friday afternoon I called in the receptionist and said, "I'm the new boss. Monday morning, I want you to take me around and introduce me properly to everyone. Tell them I'm now in charge here."

Then I phoned B.G.'s secretary and told her, "I want

this man out of my office on Monday morning." She said, "While I've got you, Mr. Gordon wants to see you downstairs in his office right away." I said, "Okay, I'll go down just as soon as I get through here." She said, "Right away." She was nervous. When they say Gordon's name, they all shake. I'll tell you this, I'm not afraid of anybody. So I finally went down.

The boss had a tremendous office. I walked in and he said, "Are you John Slate?" I said, "Yes, sir."

He said, "Shut up!" Just like that. No reason. All I had said was, "Yes, sir." So I started to walk in and across to his desk. I had gotten about four steps inside the threshold when he hollers, "Stand right there. I didn't ask you to come into my office. I told you to come down, but I didn't tell you to come in."

Well, I was completely flustered. I can't tell you the way I felt. I know I blushed from my feet right up to the top of my head. I stood there for a couple of minutes. "I want to look you over," he said. "You know, we don't hire people from the outside. I understand you have quite a reputation in sales management, but I don't believe in that stuff. I want you to know it's a waste of money."

I didn't open my mouth because I was so shocked. He's very gruff. Nobody had insulted me like this before. First the fight for my office, and now this! What a way to start a new job! I just stood there like a damn fool. I didn't know what to do. The way he had told me to shut up—I had never run into anything like that before.

He started asking me how much he was paying me. As if he didn't know. And I told him. He started to figure out how much product we'd have to sell, at so much rate of profit, to pay my salary. He told me he expected me to do a good job.

"Get out!" I started to open my mouth, but he says, "I told you to shut up. When you're in my office, I do the talking. When I'm in your office you do the talking. Remember that, young man. Out!" He wiggled his finger at me contemptuously.

I was so embarrassed. I don't know if you can under-

stand. He had caught me unawares. I didn't know what to do. I didn't know whether or not to quit the job on the spot. I wondered then how much contact I would have with this man.

About a week later a problem came up. He asked me to come in and give him any suggestions I might have. I went inside and all the executives were sitting around a big table. He was at the end. I didn't know who they were. I'd never met them.

So old man Gordon said, "Here's what I'm going to do." He started to say something and I interrupted him. I said, "Mr. Gordon, you're way off base on this thing."

Well, you'd think you were talking to God Himself. He said, "Shut up!" I said, "B.G., you asked me to come in here and give you my ideas. If you accept them, fine."

He said, "All right, you've got the floor. You go ahead. But let me tell you one thing. If you want to hold a meeting with these people, you hold your own damn meeting. This is mine, see?" That's the way he is. He's one of the most hated men in the industry.

So I told him I'd like to have my say. I was irritated because the week before he had embarrassed me and now he was going to embarrass me again. They told me he had fired everyone in management who had ever disagreed with him, but I'll tell you frankly I didn't give a damn. So I gave him my opinions, and he listened. He thought they might be some good ideas. All of a sudden, he turns to the others and says, "The rest of you, out! Slate knows more about it than you do."

After they left, in about ten seconds flat, he said to me, "Now listen. I want you to know one thing. When I want your advice I'll ask for it. Don't ever interrupt a meeting again."

"Well, sir," I said, "I want *you* to know one thing. If I feel that your actions will reflect on the company, I feel a due loyalty to you to make that statement. This is no reflection on your judgment, B.G. It's no reflection on anyone's. But remember this, I spent 16 years in this business. You know more about the rest of the business, about

which I pretend to know nothing. But there's one thing I do know—what you should or should not do about a sales problem.”

He said, “You make sense.” He called a meeting of my sales force, and I thought he was going to follow my recommendations. But at the meeting, you couldn't shut him up. He told the men of his new plans. He talked endlessly. After the meeting, he asked me what I thought of the way he handled it.

I said, “It was terrible.” So he threw me out. I began to worry whether I was overstepping myself. But the next day he called me back in while the purchasing agent was in there. Gordon was bawling him out so badly that I was embarrassed to be there. The man's face was absolutely blood red. Well, Gordon turns to me, criticizes this man, and gives me part of his job to do.

That's the way he operates. He dotes on ripping you apart any time you walk into his office about anything. He'll always find a reason to tear you apart. He plays two or three people one against the other when he wants a job done because he knows that one of them will do it right. He doesn't care what animosity it will cause. That's the way he runs the company.

Another time he called me in and gave me a job that belonged to the executive vice-president, my immediate superior. I knew it meant trouble for me to take it, but I had no choice. He was using me to undercut my boss, but he didn't care. He had no use for the executive V.P. because he had frightened him to death. In fact, the executive V.P. started to shiver when he got on the phone with B.G. My attitude was, I'm not afraid of anybody.

From then on, every time he wanted a job done, he called on me. Thereafter if I ever differed with him on an opinion, I'd tell him so. He'd raise hell with me just like he did today. We had another argument at lunch today and finally he kind of chuckled a little bit. He says, “You know, one thing I like about you. You'll always tell me the truth. People would ‘yes’ me over at my office. You have a simple honesty that I admire.

"But I'm telling you one thing, Slate. You're not going to be in your job by the first of the year." I said, "Well, at least I admire you for one thing. You're honest about it too."

He told me he didn't think I was right for sales manager. "You know," he reminded me, "I talked to you about this last December. Why didn't you remind me about it?"

"Because you were going to call me, remember?"

"I don't scare you, do I?" Gordon asked me.

"What's there to be scared of, B.G.? Why should I be afraid of you? I have enough confidence in my own ability." I told him right out.

"You know, I've been thinking," the boss said. "I don't think you're cut out for sales manager. What do you think about taking over as director of marketing?"

I told him I'd think about it. But I said I wouldn't take it unless he gave me a five-year contract and a \$10,000 raise. And he'd have to announce it as a promotion.

He listened seriously and then said, "Who do you think you should report to?"

I said, "You. You run the company." He blew up when I said that. He said, "Lunch over. I don't want to have anything more to do with you. Get out! Take care of the check." And he got up and walked out.

When John Slate found himself suddenly sitting alone at the luncheon table, a wave of panic swept through him. The president's harsh words rang in his ears, "I don't want to have anything more to do with you. Get out!"

Did that mean he was through? Had he been fired? For eight years, he had lived on the edge of a precipice, always secretly fearing dismissal. He knew B.G. respected his judgment, but he also knew B.G. had fired every other executive who had disagreed with him. The president had often spoken brutally to him, but never like this. Was he out?

I told him I didn't think so and, in fact, that he would get his promotion on his terms. John couldn't understand why, and it took me, too, a long time to understand why.

John had seemingly broken all the rules for survival; yet he had survived. He had criticized, insulted, and abused his employer, not once, but repeatedly, from the first days he had joined the company. Yet despite the threats and insults, he had won promotions and generous raises too, because the boss believed John wasn't intimidated, no matter what was going on in the pit of John's stomach.

John hated the president, and he made very little secret of it. The president detested him; yet the president promoted him. It was a complex relationship.

I pointed out to John that he was the one executive who had never feared to speak honestly to B.G., and that he stood alone among a crowd of sycophants. For this reason the boss trusted him, despite the violent abuse. But John himself wouldn't admit, because he didn't recognize, that he was hostile to the president. "Of course I don't like him," he confessed to me, "but I've never shown it. I've never said a nasty word to him. Nothing like he's said to me."

So I had to go back to the beginning to convince him that he had indeed insulted the boss.

"Remember that first meeting you went to, John?" I recalled. "He was surrounded by his vice-presidents. You didn't even know them. But you told him his ideas were all wrong. Nobody likes to be told he's all wrong, but especially in front of others. You not only criticized him but you humiliated him in front of his staff."

"Well . . ."

"Then, when he bawled you out after the meeting, you didn't apologize for embarrassing him, but you went and hit him again. You suggested that perhaps his actions would reflect on the company. Wasn't that a little presumptuous of you, especially since you had just joined the company? After all, it was *his* company, not yours."

"But he admitted I was right. He said so. He followed my recommendations," Slate insisted.

"We'll come back to him in a minute," I told John. "Meanwhile, let's stick to what you've done. Even today. You told him you had fired his favorite man, without

even asking his approval. That wasn't the way to build a good relationship with the president, was it?"

So we traced a whole series of incidents, going right back to the beginning, until finally John Slate was willing, although reluctantly, to admit that he had argued with, provoked, irritated, annoyed, and ridiculed the president at every possible opportunity for the past eight years.

"I see what you mean," John finally declared. "But I couldn't have done everything wrong or he would have fired me."

Well, John Slate *had* done everything wrong. I told him so. In any other company he would long since have been fired, probably right after that first meeting. John was a rigid man, tense of manner, with an habitually angry expression on his face. I didn't expect him to change, and I told him that too.

Then why had he survived? He had little understanding of his personal attitudes. He was an angry and hostile man. Yet here he was, about to be made director of marketing with a \$10,000 salary increase. How come?

"Let's look at the president for a moment," I suggested. "If your description is accurate—and even if you're exaggerating, I think you're basically accurate—he's not a very pleasant man."

John interjected, "I hate him."

"Is it any wonder? From the first time you met him, he was rude and offensive. You walked into his office and before you said a word, he had already insulted you and embarrassed you. Nobody likes that."

"I wasn't expecting it. He caught me off guard," John told me.

"Suppose you *were* expecting it. Would it have made any difference?" I answered my own question: "Of course not. Nobody wants to be hurt. Then he told you, in effect, that you weren't worth your salary. What he said was, 'I don't believe in sales management'—just what he had hired you to do.

"In fact, he hasn't lost a single chance to cut you down to size, has he? Even today. He tells you you've failed as

general sales manager. Did you really fail? Well, John, then why did he offer you ■ promotion? Hasn't it been like that since the beginning? Hasn't he ripped you apart every chance he got, and then followed your advice?" I paused for a moment, and John nodded in agreement.

"Why has Gordon done it?" I asked. "We don't know, and it isn't our business to try to figure out what's inside of him, or how he got that way. The only thing we have to go by is what he says and does. And by that standard, we have to conclude that he's an angry man. Somehow, he needs to tear down everyone and destroy them. I say everyone, and not just you, because he attacked you even before he had met you; before you could have done anything to cause it. He did it to all his vice-presidents. He's done it to everyone."

"Everyone in the food products industry hates him," John repeated.

"No doubt about it," I agreed. "I'll accept your word for that. So if he tries to destroy everyone, why didn't he destroy you by firing you? You certainly gave him all the excuses he needed."

John couldn't figure out the answer to that one.

"Maybe," I hesitated, "the answer is that Gordon is a bully. He's been pushing people around for years and getting away with it, because nobody would dare to talk back to him for fear of losing his job. He's surrounded himself with 'yes' men. The 'no' men were fired."

"I'm not a 'yes' man, damn it," John protested. "I tell him exactly what I think."

"Yes, you do, and I think that's the one thing that's saved you. You're probably the only man he's ever met as tough as he is. Every time he pushed you, you pushed him right back. Every time he insulted you, you insulted him right back. Maybe twice as much, for good measure. And it's typical of a bully that the only one he respects is the man he can't push around. Maybe you wanted to keep your job, but you didn't act as if you wanted it. You acted as if you didn't care whether or not he fired you, just as long as you could first put him in his place.

"And that's apparently what saved you. Somehow, without knowing what you were doing, you established the right relationship with him from the beginning. You wouldn't take any of his guff, and you wouldn't let him cow you. You told him the truth as you saw it and you were ready to take the consequences. So he respected you. That's why I think your job is safe as long as you keep arguing and talking back. But the minute you weaken, you're through."

John got the point, and he got the promotion as I had predicted he would. I could never convince him how lucky he had been. His was the exception that proves the rule: Don't talk back to the boss.

But how could you tell that to a man who had just demanded and won a \$10,000 raise minutes after his boss had virtually fired him?

Just don't you try it.

CHAPTER 3

Triple Threat

TODD OLIVER is an executive who has learned to handle himself successfully in situations where lesser men would have thrown up their hands in despair. His business career has been unusually successful, and if you knew his real name, you could find his rather impressive biography in *Who's Who in America*.

Not that Oliver has had a meteoric rise. In a 25-year span, he has worked for three corporations. During the last 16-year period, he has held executive positions of increasing importance. He has worked for many different managers as he threaded his way in and out of different departments and positions while moving up the line.

By his own description, a few of those bosses were "miserable no-goods"; one or two were unusually helpful; and most were just average supervisors, neither especially easy or difficult to work for.

Todd Oliver himself is a most capable executive, with solid business judgment and thorough experience in the special problems of his highly competitive industry. Yet, in fairness, you could not say that he was either more or less qualified professionally than a hundred other executives in his field, none of whose business careers match his.

But Oliver's business career differs sharply from the others. For, unlike those of most top executives, all of his job changes have been made voluntarily. Never has he been fired. Never has he been forced out of a position. Never have his employers suggested that it might be in

his own best interests to begin looking for another job. Always he has left of his own volition for a better post.

When you listen to Todd Oliver tell the story of his business life, you soon discover that his success is not an accident. Rather, it is due to his unusual skill at handling people. He had developed that ability to a fine art.

Todd told me that he simply takes for granted that he is professionally qualified to do his job, and he goes ahead and does it. But never for a moment does he assume that this will insure his success. "It's the people I worry about," he says. "At the beginning especially, I probably spend half my time worrying about them and how to get along with them."

"What does 'getting along with them' mean?" I asked.

"It means finding out what they really want from me," Todd answered. "Not what they want, but what they really want. It may be very different; it may even be just the opposite of what they say."

I asked him how he decided what they really wanted.

"It's not always easy, but you get the hang of it after a while. Mostly, you listen. You listen to what they talk about; what's important to them. Remember that everybody has an image of himself. I try to figure out what it is, and then reinforce it.

"I know that if I do anything to threaten a man's image of himself, I'm going to be in trouble. I avoid doing anything that will make my boss look bad in general, but more particularly, anything that will make my boss look bad in his own eyes. That's sudden death.

"When I go into a man's office, I look it over carefully. Maybe it gives me some clues as to how he sees himself. Then I try to put those clues to work in the way I handle him."

A few years ago, Todd left a middle management position in a fine company for a much bigger post in a smaller organization. The smaller company was well respected in the industry, and Todd thought his career would suddenly blossom.

But soon after he entered his new company, he dis-

covered things weren't quite the way he expected them to be. Inside reality didn't match the company's outside reputation. Notice how Todd Oliver's story analyzes the personalities of the three owners of the company, with hardly a reference to the business problems themselves. To him, the latter weren't worth discussion; he could handle them with his usual self-confidence:

One of my strangest experiences was as director of marketing for a photographic equipment manufacturer. The firm had a highly respected name in the industry. I felt that my success was inevitable because it seemed that I had everything in my favor. I had a wonderful line of products behind me, good production facilities, manpower, adequate finances; everything that the company could need. I personally had a good expense account, and so forth. One thing I did overlook. I can't say that I overlooked it; I was aware of it. But I wasn't aware that it would be present in such a horrible, overwhelming degree.

That was the temperament and personalities of the three controlling partners. Each partner worked in a different area of activity. One was general manager. One was in charge of manufacturing, and one was responsible for new product development.

Each partner was so insanely jealous that he did not speak to the others unless absolutely forced into it. They communicated once or twice a month. They met behind locked doors and no one, regardless of his stature or importance, had ever been invited to one of their conferences. I have been told that on occasion their meetings had been rather noisy.

Unfortunately, the same jealousy existed in all their contacts in the business world. They had been partners for well over 25 years. They had always had this kind of a relationship. They should have broken up long before but they didn't have the intestinal fortitude to do it. They had been beneficiaries of the very happy circumstance of being in the right place at the right time. The happy circumstance was that they had been associates of Mr.

Jeffrey Allen, ■ major pioneer in the industry. Mr. Allen was a dynamo.

They never realized that this man not only made all the decisions but was responsible for every breath they took in the business world. And then Mr. Allen died and left the business to the three partners. It is true that he consciously picked weak men. These were the weak men. Actually, the general manager that I worked under, the controlling factor in the firm, secretly was called behind his back, "Mr. Allen's valet." When Mr. Allen came or went, this partner had literally held his coat and held his hat.

From the time they had taken over, five years earlier, the business had been going downward. The decline had accelerated over the last two years and the partners realized suddenly that they were in trouble. They never admitted it but they must have realized, of course, that it was their fault.

They lived in an ivory tower. They were constantly relating to the past and to the great achievements for which they felt themselves responsible. Actually, they knew—and you knew when they told you—that it was not their work. It was Mr. Allen's. When they were with a business contact the past was a major part of their conversation. They had no ideas. They had no imagination. They merely expressed the great past accomplishments that they felt responsible for.

Then I came along. They hired me from the major company in the industry. It was a big step up for me, and it meant a big raise. I had given up ■ generous profit-sharing plan to come with them, and they made it very attractive for me.

The controller of the company brought me in. He felt that an outsider could be a catalyst to bring the partners together. He was ■ senior member of the firm and had started out with Mr. Allen. He handled the partners. He told me several times he thought I was very diplomatic. Perhaps he thought that by diplomacy and good manners, rather than by any special business acumen, a newcomer could pull this thing together.

But I quickly discovered that the partners would not accept the invitation to pull together in any shape or form. They made it very quickly known to me that any attempt to pull them together would be frowned on, and I would quickly find myself out of a job.

When I tried to get two or three of them together, it was obvious from the remarks that they made that this would not happen. They had no desire for any cooperative effort, because one happened to be an administrator; one was a designer; one was in manufacturing. And they had no use for each other.

So what do you do when you discover, three weeks after you're there, that the premise on which you were hired does not exist?

I suppose I used the P. T. Barnum method. I put on a three-ring circus. One ring for each partner, a different act in each ring. Partner Number One, in ring Number One, I left pretty much alone. By ignoring him I really pleased him because he actually did not want interference with his particular world, which was manufacturing. He wanted to hold onto it very tightly and very closely. He assumed that he did not need help. He did not want new ideas or new anything brought to him.

In his office he had a special chair with a very, very high back, almost like a monarch's throne. The chair itself was raised almost a foot from the floor on a small platform. He had one of the most fantastic desks I've ever seen. It was a large, curved, marble-topped desk which extended across the floor. He would sit back as though looking down on his subjects. He would pull his glasses down on the end of his nose and place his hands over a very fat paunch when he talked to you.

Actually, he rates as one of the most egotistical men I have ever encountered, and probably he had as little on the ball as anybody I have ever encountered, which was doubly bad. The ego showed in his dress. Oddly enough in this modern day and age, he wore a heavy watch chain with, believe it or not, a heavy watch fob which went across the front of his vest. He seemed to be a rather imposing man.

But he was a man without friends. No one in the company liked him. He was supposed to be a production expert. I lost respect for him the first week I was there when I went through the plant and saw the obsolete equipment he was using. I finally decided this man had nothing on the ball except a gigantic ego.

The first few seconds I was with this man I had made a few remarks that were, at the time, sincere compliments, because before I had joined the company I had an idea that he was a genius. I made some very complimentary remarks and, much to my surprise, won him over completely. He was one of my big champions. He thought my coming there was wonderful. From then on I decided to follow a course of flattering him.

I saw that if you asked for his opinion and mentioned his vast knowledge, and you did it in a way that was highly flattering, everything was fine. So I would go in and sit down and tell him I needed his help and his cooperation. I felt that I could go to no better source, and would he please give me an idea of what direction to take? I would approach him as if I were a child approaching a stern father.

Thereafter, I must admit that every time I had the unfortunate occasion to converse with this man, I resorted to flattery. It had to be heavy-handed, because this man was very sensitive in a way, and yet very insensitive in other ways. He was one of the few men I ever met in my life whom you could splash with flattery of an insincere nature and get away with it. This man lived on it. You could be ridiculous. You could tell him he was the greatest man you ever met in your life. I would say, "That speech you made in Albany, Georgia, was absolutely brilliant." There was no such thing as moderation.

This guy needed praise so desperately you could just slap it on like a paintbrush and he lapped it up. He would just smile like a small child when you give him a delicious piece of candy. He would beam from ear to ear. It was the one thing he really enjoyed in life.

When you came in he'd say, "I'm so busy. Please be brief about this." But as soon as you'd started on your lit-

the flattery preamble, he'd sit back and forget all about time and he'd just go off. He'd talk maybe half an hour, or maybe he'd go on for two hours. Then he'd end up by saying, "Well, this is confidential and I don't want anyone else around here to know I'm telling you this valuable information. Let's keep it between ourselves." But actually none of the other partners would have been interested in what he had to say. The stuff wasn't valuable. He never told me anything a high school boy wouldn't know.

How did I feel about having to go through this insincerity? I felt like a prostitute. I wondered at what point in my term with this company I had lost my soul. It was a rather degrading thing to do. I felt ashamed of myself many times. But in business you have to survive and this was just one thing. In every position, I felt, there are things you have to do, and it could have been a lot worse than flattering a man's ego. Possibly he needed this to survive.

And I rationalized. I salved my conscience by saying I was giving him something of value. I was probably giving him food. There's nothing wrong with that. To him, flattery was like food to a starving man. But to compliment someone successfully takes a great deal of finesse. It takes a very quick brain to evaluate the situation and, without seeming insincere, to hand out insincere flattery. It's almost an art that comes after long years of being with people.

Only once did I have trouble with him, when he was out of town and I had the opportunity to do him ■ favor by taking ■ certain action. He felt that I should have waited until he came back. I purposely had not waited because I knew if he got into it we would have become involved in ■ mess. To get out of trouble I used subterfuge again. Told him I knew he would take care of the situation when he came back. Told him he was my ace in the hole because if I did slip, then I would bring out the big strong man and he could help me out. I let him think it was a minor thing I had started and he was going to play the big major role. Put the cap on the climax. You couldn't get in trouble with this man because he was too easily flattered.

I don't think others in the company recognized that he needed flattery. Others had worked with this man for 25 years, and he actually had them awed. The others were curious as to how I managed to get along with him so well. I told them tactfully that I very gently praised his good points. Much to my surprise, I found out that while on the surface they were awed by this man, underneath they not only resented him but they felt just the same way that I did. He was completely a bluff. They knew it. But they hadn't learned what to do about it.

That was partner Number One.

Partner Number Two, the managing director, was in my mind one of the most unfortunate men that I have ever met. He was a very handsome executive of about 50 who had all the earmarks and appearance of a great man. I even told my wife at first that I was very proud to be working for such a gentleman and such a brain in the industry—because his name is the name of a leader in the industry.

I started to rely on his judgment. I tried to learn the history of the company to familiarize myself with the past performance. In all sincerity, I approached this gentleman from two directions. One, to learn all I could about him and his thinking regarding the company's future. Two, to learn how he would respond to me.

And much to my horror, after a very short time I discovered the man actually had no capabilities. It didn't take long to find out that he was just a shell of a man. To my mind, he should no more have the position of managing director of a company this size than Alice in Wonderland. If he took a six-months' vacation, nobody would miss him for five minutes.

I saw this, but I was reluctant to believe it because I had created an image in my own mind that I refused to break down. To crystallize this, I asked the vice-president in charge of personnel one day, "If you were going to describe his abilities, what would you say?" He looked at me blankly for a moment and said, "Gee, I don't know . . . I don't know."

As to his business judgment, for 25 years the man had

avoided making any decisions whatsoever. Like any other muscle, the brain can become flabby. This man was so much in doubt it was a wonder he could find his way home at night. There was nothing on which he could make a decision. It would take him quite a time to decide if he wanted a cup of coffee in the morning. Then, when it was placed on his desk, he didn't know whether or not to drink it. I mean that literally.

One thing that might put a little humor in this picture: He was affectionately known among the employees as "the six-foot chicken," which sort of summarizes the whole thing. What does that mean? Well, he was not only in doubt but very wary of making any kind of a positive comment. That's the chicken. The "six-foot" part came from the fact that he was about six feet tall.

In contrast to the other partner who was so prone to fall for flattery, he was very wary of it. He would take a certain number of compliments if they were given sincerely. But beyond that, he would evaluate praise objectively. In this respect he showed a great deal of common sense, which made me believe that somewhere along the line he realized his limitations. He also knew it was pretty late in the afternoon to do anything about it. He knew his own limitations because too many people had told him of his failures. Even his partners. They made snide remarks behind his back.

I had a good relationship with him all the way through. But when I asked him for help, he would look vaguely out the window and suggest that I might talk to his secretary and she'd pull some stuff out of the file.

I suddenly saw that I was confusing him and causing him a great deal of frustration. Suddenly, he was confused as to how he could answer my questions. I was told to approach him as I would a small child and to phrase my questions accordingly. And if I wrote something to him, I would write it as if to my youngest child. He reacted not badly—very well in fact—when I treated him this way.

He seemed to be incapable of any great irritations or

any great show of temper. When he became irritated, I'd listen to him and then I'd say, "Well, I don't blame you for being irritated. Let's go over the problem and find out exactly what it is, and where I can help you." And in two minutes the irritation and the problem would disappear.

If I had something important to go over with him, I tried to bring in the vice-president for personnel. The reason was to keep his attention on the subject because if only one man was in the office, his mind would wander. He'd look out the window and say, "Look at that smoke down the street. I wonder what's burning?"

Regardless of the situation, and it could be a very critical situation where time and money were both involved, he would wander off and look down the street and wonder why the fire siren was going off. He'd be completely lost and off the subject. To capture his attention and get him back on the subject sometimes was very difficult. At that point, he'd want to dismiss you to be all alone by himself.

I got along with him very well. I suppose occasionally I irritated him when I needed to bring the proper elements of manpower together for a project. When I had to ask his help, he'd recognize his own inadequacies and he'd resent it. So I'd walk in and suggest a particular team for the task force. That would spare him the necessity of thinking out the problem.

I'd say, "I'm only doing this footwork for you because I assume these are the men you want to use. If there are any others you want, I'd be glad to get them too. I'll bring them in at a time appointed by you for a meeting with you. And you won't have to go through all the labor pains of trying to pull the loose ends together." Then he'd be very happy and say, "Well, go ahead," and he'd probably forget about the whole thing.

I found another technique of handling him. That was to ask him to come to lunch when I had an important client with me. He'd be tickled to death. He was a great name-dropper. If we got into a situation where he had an opportunity to flaunt his social prestige, he'd be most happy.

You'd give him a few drinks at noontime and a chance

to talk for an hour on his past glory. He'd get carried away with himself and he'd laugh and giggle and jump up and down in the restaurant. He'd actually jump up and down and clap his hands. I mean that literally. And he'd put up such a show that for a minute it would literally astound the people. They'd wonder what had happened to his dignity.

I had to figure out when his presence would help the company, and when to keep him away. I finally decided he was great, very impressive, for a first meeting. But no more. He could talk about himself at the first meeting, but after that he ran out of things to say. And people were more interested in their own problems anyway. The reactions I got could be summarized by what one client said to me, "Will you please keep this man out of further meetings because he tells me nothing, and he's annoying." After the first hour, I think most of the people discovered this. So I gave him one hour and no more, and he was happy. I got along with him very well.

That was partner Number Two, partner in charge of Nothing.

The third partner had the misfortune to be the son of the founder, but he was not the controlling factor in the organization. He was in many ways a capable designer and engineer, but somewhat spoiled and lazy. He grew up in wealth. He didn't like to take on work or even responsibility. He would give me full rein to take over a problem, and his first reaction was, "It sounds wonderful. You handle it. If you get into trouble, come back to me."

He could have been the perfect executive except that when you went back to him for help, and you invariably needed high-level help, he had no idea of what you were doing. He had no particular recollection of it, and he became quite annoyed. He wondered why you pulled together that particular manpower group. You'd remind him that he said to do it that way. He had forgotten.

He was snobbish, standoffish. You'd bring in a few people to sit down and talk to him. First, he'd be gracious, and then he'd turn off the charm. It would become quite obvious that you and your guests were strangers in his

office, and unwanted strangers at that. Somebody described him as a man who was dedicated to his business as long as it didn't interfere with his pleasure.

However, we had ■ very good relationship. Right from the beginning I handled him very carefully, listening. He responded to a little humor. But he was a very difficult man, because you would start to talk to him about an important project and before you had even explained the first elements, he'd say, "Well, that's great. You handle it yourself."

So you never really got 50 percent of the message over to him. But it didn't make any difference. You just picked up the ball and ran with it.

We got along fine. However, you constantly had to be careful because although he seemed to be ■ champion of "you go out and do it," he really couldn't stand this. He actually wanted to be the kingpin. His feelings would be hurt if you didn't bring him in, even though he had requested it that way. He just couldn't stand to be left out, and yet he wouldn't get into it. He was very sensitive to this. This is where you could really run into trouble.

I learned to handle him by giving him written reports, and when the occasion permitted, oral reports. Twice a day if possible. Actually, my salvation was just keeping him informed and overinformed, which made him feel happy.

It took me quite a while to get onto it because it was just a little subtlety and was exactly the opposite of what he said he wanted. Where the normal course of events might require one report, I might give him 12. Of course, he didn't read them. He'd look at them and see that my name was signed. Then he'd hand them back to his secretary. I'd go in and say, "This and that happened," and he'd make a great show of knowledge. But when it came down to the fine points and we had to work out the technicalities, he'd have no ideas. Obviously, he didn't know what was going on, but he was very happy with me and we got along fine.

That was partner Number Three.

Now do you see why the company was losing ground?

It was a sick situation and I really wasn't in a position to change it. Most of my time during the first six months I felt sorry for myself when I realized the situation I was in. Also I was wasting a lot of time in trying to evaluate these men and deal with them. The personnel vice-president said I succeeded better than anyone had to date. But that wasn't the way I wanted to spend my business life so I determined to leave just as soon as I could. It took me almost two years but meanwhile I stuck it out. Did the best I could and, oddly enough, managed to keep on the best of terms with all three. I couldn't bring them together but I handled 'em one by one. And pretty well, don't you think?

Yes, Todd Oliver handled himself pretty well. Very well, in fact. Finding himself in a sick company, he soon discovered three solid reasons why the company was sick. Those three solid reasons were the three controlling partners, who lacked the ability or motivation, or both, to propel the company forward.

The ill will of any of the three could have squashed Oliver's chances for survival. Each was obviously a difficult personality and their mutual animosity compounded his problems.

When Todd Oliver discovered that his efforts to bring the three men together were unwanted, he applied his talents to coping with each of them separately. For one partner he used flattery. For the second, Todd followed a course of gently helping him to reach decisions, and then left him alone while Todd executed those decisions. And for the third, Todd found a way of making him feel that he was participating in activity while actually Todd did the work. All three tactics were effective.

Todd shrewdly manipulated all three of his superiors. He had qualms about it. The qualms were not strong enough to deter him but they bothered his conscience nevertheless. At one point he even went to discuss it with his minister. What about his insincere flattery? Was it a decent thing to do? Was it honorable? Was it ethical? Todd discussed it with me at length:

I don't want to be a phony. I don't want to live that way. Yet, here I was doing just that. I looked at it from every possible angle. Not just trying to justify myself, but honestly trying to figure out the right thing to do. After all, I have to live with myself.

And it finally came down to two points. The first was simply that I had to survive. No question in my mind about that. What I was doing meant survival. It meant my wife and children could eat. It meant that I could hold my job. I'll tell you I have no doubt that I would have been out of there pretty fast if I hadn't done it.

But there was a more important point. I wasn't hurting anybody. Take the first partner, for instance. My compliments didn't injure him. On the contrary, they helped him. He was a terribly insecure man. I don't know whether anybody had ever before complimented him for anything. He acted as if nobody had. He acted as if mine were the first kind words he had ever received. He thrived on them. He was happier for them.

You could say I was helping him to live in a fool's paradise, but don't we all live on illusions of one sort or another? I didn't create his world; I only helped him live in it.

What would have happened if I had destroyed his little world? Never mind *me*. I mean, what would have happened to *him*? Suppose he suddenly discovered that people thought he was a blundering idiot? He would have gone to pieces, because nobody can take that.

I think there is a place in life for the little white lie. The lie that hurts nobody, and is really an act of kindness. You know, I discovered long ago that people who make a great point of always telling the complete and unvarnished truth really do it to hurt others.

From a moral viewpoint, from an ethical viewpoint, isn't the kindness of a white lie sometimes better? Isn't it better to avoid hurting people? To give people what they need?

Especially if it means saving your own job as well?

CHAPTER 4

The Nonconformist

MUST you conform to get ahead in a giant corporation?

This is the story of an executive who isn't a conformist, but is nevertheless a successful manager. He is a big man in a big job in a big company. By his own admission, he isn't astute in handling people, and when you read his story you'll recognize where and how he created some of his own difficulties.

His conclusion was that only his decisiveness saved him, but my conclusion is that had he handled his colleagues more tactfully, he would have advanced much faster and much further. Judge for yourself:

Our corporation is one of the 20 largest companies in the United States. Just to give you an idea of our size, we have assets of almost \$2,000,000,000, and we have almost 100,000 employees. There are a whale of a lot of executives in that number. Junior executives, middle management executives, top executives, executives who manage other executives, executives who assist other executives. A vast empire. So big you hardly know anyone except the few dozen people you come in contact with every day on your job.

We have recruiters out combing the college campuses for promising young men. We swallow them by the hundreds every June. We have instructions to keep our eyes open for outstanding young men we meet in other companies, to attract them to join us.

We've been growing, growing, growing. That means lots of promotions have opened up all the way up the line. The company has been good to me. At 45, I've reached a pretty high point in the organization. I manage an entire department, a very large one. And they pay me well; let's say, very well.

In a company like ours, where the competition for advancement is so keen, you know that means I do a good job for them. They've told me so. You get the word at your yearly review meetings. Once a year your supervisor is supposed to call you in and evaluate your performance during the past year. I do it for each of the people who report to me, and my boss does it for me. The company rules are, first of all, that you report only on the men who report directly to you. Second, you have to write down afterwards all the points you made at the meeting with him, and what he said to you. It all goes into his file, and I suppose it stays there forever. They probably have it all on microfilm too, buried somewhere inside a mountain in Appalachia.

After the review, an analysis is made jointly by your department head and the personnel manager to see whether, out of the entire department's reviews, some heads are popping up out of the crowd. I have consistently been one of those listed as heads up over the executive crowd.

The system generally works fairly well, although of course there are shortcomings. Sometimes all the boss can remember when he writes his report is something that went wrong yesterday. "The good oft gets interred." And, of course, he can't help but be influenced by the personality problems that arise all the time.

This system is necessary, however, because men move around often in our company from one department to another, and even from one division to another. It's all too impersonal to depend on the memory of the boss, because the boss himself may be transferred tomorrow. It's a good system, but I think it doesn't eliminate the personal factor in your career. In other words, you can do good work and

still come out at the end of the year with a poor annual review.

Let's be frank. That's what happened to me. My work has been good—it must have been—otherwise, they wouldn't keep moving me up. But you know me. I'm a rough guy. I say what I think. I do what I think ought to be done. I'm not a conformist.

And that's been both the plus and the minus in my career with the company. The plus, because they know I move in and do a job. I make decisions. The minus, because I often rub people the wrong way in carrying out those decisions. Of course, what they'd like is for me to be nice and gentle and say my piece without stepping on anybody's toes. But it can't be done. At least, I can't do it.

This came up right in my first job with the company—in fact, with the man who brought me in here. The first boss I had was an old bachelor. He wanted me to come to work for the company so badly that he brought me to our corporate headquarters five times, and finally the money became so attractive that I took the bait.

I worked with him for two years, but I'll never forget the day when we had a meeting to discuss the introduction of a new product. I was agreeing with the research people, and he was disagreeing with both of us, when he turned to me in a fit of anger and said, "You're trying to get my job."

Just like that. Right in front of all those people. I spoke up. "Vernon," I said, "I feel that I would be derelict in my duties to the company if I didn't support what, in my opinion, are sound recommendations. I think we ought to accept these recommendations.

"I am not trying to get your job. In the first place, you have been with the company for 35 years, and I cannot get your job. I've been with the company for one year now, and you know I'm not going to get your job. And secondly, you know a hell of a lot more than I do. Just because I don't agree with you all the time doesn't mean I want your job."

This was a guy who loved deeply or not at all. He took you to his heart when he liked you, and I've seen him

throw people out of his life for the slightest hurt of some kind. Before this incident, he often used to come out to our home and eat our food and sleep on our davenport. After that incident, he didn't. He stopped. I went on working with him for about another six months. I had one review from him, such as it was. He didn't damn me, but he gave me very faint praise. I don't know whether or not it hurt me at the time, but I can't say I was sorry when he retired.

Then I had a second supervisor. He was the biggest buck passer I ever knew. He was a nice guy; had a lovely wife; two nice boys. But he was one of the most indecisive people I have known. It showed in the long memorandums he wrote. Rather than making a one-paragraph or even a one-page recommendation, he would write three or four different approaches and possible solutions, which might take three or four pages.

He didn't make recommendations. He merely said, "Here's what you can do." His excuse for doing this was that he wanted to view a question from all sides. The same thing was true in his work as a supervisor. You'd ask him to do something. Could you go ahead with a project that was routinely done year after year?

For example, this was in our automotive equipment division. We always made summer kits for gas stations and auto supply stores, with the usual banners and streamers. Time after time, you knew it was going to be in our sales program. It had been in the program since 1932, and it would stay in the program until 1992, or whenever the country gave up cars and went back to horses and buggies.

Well, he wouldn't give me a go-ahead. It got to the point where we were getting short on time. I would go to him and suggest that we ought to move. I would get all kinds of excuses why we couldn't do it today, or why we didn't want to talk about it today. So I'd bring it up tomorrow, and it would be put off and put off. It finally got to the point where I would say, "Claude, you don't mind if I go ahead with this thing, do you?" Evidently he was relieved, and he said, "No, you go right ahead."

He let me make the decision; he didn't want to make it.

I don't think a guy like this could survive in a small company. I think the reason he got away with it in a big company was because there were always people above him who hated to make decisions themselves. So they rated him favorably on his annual review because he was just like them. You don't think they were going to criticize him for buck-passing when they did it themselves? This guy was the worst, but interestingly enough, he has stayed on. And he gave me a good review because I made his decisions for him.

Early in my career I had another clash with a supervisor because I spoke out frankly and bluntly. Our division sales manager had called a meeting to decide our sales goals, our objectives, dollar volume, and so forth. He wanted to get some agreement on the direction of our sales plan. All during the discussion, whenever anybody was on his feet talking about the program, this division sales manager kept talking on the side, and he didn't have a very light voice.

It finally came to the point where I just stopped the meeting. I went over to him and asked him privately to talk more softly. But he took umbrage and told me I was out of order. If he wanted to talk, he could talk. It was a right-on, head-to-head bang between us.

So at lunchtime, I pointed out to him, out of politeness to the other people, that his loud voice was a disturbing influence. I felt if he had something relevant to say, either talk up or hold his fire, but don't disturb other people. I guess he resented very much my saying this.

In the middle of the afternoon, we were about to finalize the program which, up to this point, he had blessed and the other department heads had blessed. It had the concurrence of everybody. But this manager first objected to one small part, and then he proceeded to make a 180-degree switch. He turned completely around, from complete approval of the program to complete disapproval. The rest of us sat there with our mouths open. My jaw was hanging down on my tie. Apparently, he was in a bad mood because of my talk with him at lunch.

I waited until he was finished explaining why he thought the whole program was wrong. I had all I could take, and I said so. I'm afraid I was not quite as choosy with my words as I should have been. I don't remember exactly what I said but I remember thinking, when I was lying in bed that night, that I hadn't been quite gentlemanly.

So the next day I went in and apologized to him for having spoken to him the way I did. I will say this; after I apologized, the guy said to me, "Well, you're an outspoken s.o.b., but I think you and I are going to work out all right together." Today, I have a great relationship with him. He invites me to his cocktail parties and I invite him to mine.

That incident ended smoothly, but you know they never forget these things. It all goes into your file. I discovered that last month, when my supervisor called me in to talk to me about a possible promotion.

He surprised me by saying that they wanted to transfer me to a higher level job to direct a larger department. One of the candies he held out was that the department controlled one of the largest budgets in the entire company. When my supervisor told me about it, he said there were many operational problems in the department, all of which, I might add, are now turning out to be people problems.

He said that the man whose place I would be taking was not strong enough for the job, in management's opinion, but that he did get along well with people. Everybody liked him. He just couldn't do the job.

Then he went on to say, "Well now, you have a problem in relationships here. Everybody liked Snyder, but he didn't get the job done. You're going into a situation where we hope everybody will like you, but in any case, the job must be done."

Then he suddenly turned and told me this was my annual review. He didn't lead into the subject real gently. He made an abrupt change from what we had been talking about. And in the course of the conversation, he said

that one of my problems was that I was a strong individual, and sometimes I rubbed people the wrong way.

He said, "Your last division manager pointed that out to you in your annual personnel review. His criticism was that you tended not to get along with people and that you were sometimes not very careful in the way you talked to them.

"In the course of that conversation, you told him that he had given you the first constructive review you had received in 16 years with the company. So I have gone back and talked with two of your previous division managers to find some examples to illustrate what we're talking about. I wanted to learn if they thought they had told you the same thing earlier. Because you haven't changed.

"I'll go back to the time, not during a regular performance review, but at another point when Tom Donice said you had a tendency to overpower people when you walked into their offices, sort of like Mr. Green Giant."

Now, I happen to be rather tall, but not that tall. As a matter of fact, it just happens that all the men we're talking about are about my size. So they weren't referring to my physical characteristics. I think I frightened Tom Donice. I assume he wanted me to sidle in and act like a second junior assistant. A boy, not a man.

Personally, my reaction at the time was that if a guy is concerned about how people walk into his office, he'd throw a lot of them out. In the course of events, you see a lot of salesmen of one kind or another, and not everyone parts his hair the way you like.

At the time this happened, I hadn't thought too much about it or wondered what it was in my manner he objected to. I hadn't recognized this was my formal review, something I should have been watching for. But I told Paul I remembered this incident, so he went on.

"There was another time. You were sitting in a car going to lunch with one of the division managers. He had purposely taken you out to lunch to give you your annual review. In the course of conversation in the car, he said that one of your problems was that you gravitated toward

the people higher up in the organization. He told you it was *his* job to move with the top echelons of the department, and yours to deal with the lower ones."

Now the interesting thing was that I had been on the job in this department for less than a year. I had met very few people in the field sales organization; I mean, the people lower down, the guys out in the field who call on customers. I had met the district managers and the key people, the general manager and the assistant general manager and the director of that particular section. All of them had entertained my wife and me in their homes, and we had entertained them in our home.

So when my division manager criticized me for moving with the top echelons, my reaction was essentially that the guy must have felt socially inferior. When I had asked for his help in getting to know the people down the line, he had refused help. He had said, "You will just have to do this for yourself in the normal course of the business." At a subsequent sales meeting, which incidentally was a husband and wife sales convention, he had not gone out of his way or taken me by the hand or introduced me to the sales force. So I milled around by myself with my wife.

I told Paul that I remembered that conversation. I never seriously recognized that this was a formal review either, but Paul said, "Well, these were annual reviews. These are the problems your supervisors have seen again and again. You have a tendency to overpower people, to deal with the upper echelons. You have a hard time talking with your peers."

I told him I appreciated what he was telling me, but I pointed out that our chairman of the board had made many public speeches saying the company wanted uncommon men. And based on Paul's comments, I wondered whether the company really wanted uncommon men. These comments in my annual reviews indicated they didn't like aggressiveness; they wanted it held within bounds. My superiors certainly had a feeling that people should operate within certain limits and only at certain levels. If you got beyond that, you were getting out of

line. I said frankly this didn't appeal to me a whole lot. He replied, "Maybe it's too late to teach an old dog new tricks," meaning me. And my response was, "I hope I don't have to learn new tricks to satisfy the management of this division."

You figure it out. Here he is, pointing out to me all their previous warnings, right out of my dossier. It's a wonder Interpol doesn't have it by now. All the warnings were the same, and as Paul said, they certainly made a pattern.

I admit it. I've got a real problem. I'm just not as astute as others in reading other people; I mean, in understanding their feelings. If I have a fault, it is that I rub some people the wrong way. If there's a job to be done my attitude is, let's get the damn thing done and go on to other things. Let's not be like the boss I just described who wanted to look at it from every angle. As a district manager I used to work for once said, "If you don't know what road to take, just take any road toward there and you will get there. It may not be the best road, but at least it will get you to your destination." I got ahead because I made decisions, and they knew I never ducked responsibility. I have a reputation for making decisions.

Looking back after 16 years, it may seem that I make quick decisions, but they are a long time in the hatching. There is a story told about decision-making in a large company like ours. It's like an elephant giving birth to a baby. All the action takes place on a high level with much bellying and roaring. But it takes 24 months before it produces any results. That's the way you have to operate in a big company.

I'm a little upset because I wasn't astute enough to understand what they were telling me all those years. I heard the words but I just didn't get it. It went right through me, in and out.

I'm sure I could have learned something from what they said. They were trying in their own way to be constructive. But some of those reviews may have been given by people who perhaps didn't feel secure in their own positions, and maybe they just didn't like me around.

The thing that always impresses me about annual reviews is that damn few executives have the guts to be constructively helpful. The best review system I've ever experienced was the one they used in the navy for fitness reports. You were not only required to check certain things about an officer's ability, both professional and personal, but you had to provide written explanations. In the last analysis, you had to say whether you would prefer to have him serve under you, or you would merely accept him for service under you. They varied it by degrees so you ended up giving a reasonably fair judgment of the man.

But I'm hardly in a position to complain about our company system. They found all my faults but despite them, they didn't hold me back. I don't mind being known in the company as a tough cookie, or even as a tough s.o.b., as long as that little green paper comes in the sealed envelope every Friday morning.

CHAPTER 5

Countdown

SOMETIMES it's impossible to survive in your executive job, no matter what you do.

You can find yourself in a situation where no battle tactic will produce victory; where nothing you do, or don't do, will really make a difference; where your days are numbered from your very first day on the job.

In such an executive position, your ability, or lack of it, won't count. Nor will your tact and skill in handling your boss.

This doesn't happen very often. Don't make the mistake of deciding you're in such a situation right now just because you're having a rough time. In probably nine situations out of ten, survival is possible.

It's that tenth situation we'll look at now. And it's not you but the job that you happen—momentarily—to be filling with which we are concerned. The clue to look for is whether or not management believes in the importance of the job you're doing. If you find that they don't, you can be reasonably certain that your time with the company will be short.

Perhaps you're in a service function or on a staff assignment. You know that no matter how effectively you perform your duties, they don't contribute directly to sales or profits. There's nothing wrong with that; many important jobs, like personnel or legal affairs, don't contribute directly to profits, yet they're indispensable.

But when management, personified by your boss, says

openly that he doesn't believe in the function you're performing, watch out. You can't win: if you do a poor job, you merely confirm his estimate and will be fired; if you do a job of value to the company, you will, in effect, prove the boss wrong.

Bosses don't like to be proved wrong. They don't like to admit their errors. Nobody does. If you prove the boss wrong, out you must go.

This was the story of Ed Wrendall, who was doomed from the day he was hired as export manager of a New England metalworking company. Ed waited to tell me his story until he had found a new position. Then he came into my office and permitted me to record this interview:

Q. How long were you in that job, Ed?

A. I was there exactly two years.

Q. Exactly to the day?

A. Exactly. They arranged it that way because I would have been in for a raise had I stayed one week longer. But it's quite a story. It starts with my looking for a job because my former company had been sold and a new management was taking over.

I had held my previous job for 11 years and I had reached a high salary. My standard of living was geared to it, so I couldn't go out and take just any job. I needed a job that paid in excess of \$25,000 a year but I hadn't been able to find one. I had been out of work for more than four months. I was getting desperate. Unless I found something soon, I was going to have to refinance my mortgage to get some cash. Meanwhile, my nerves were on edge. It was playing hell with my marriage.

Then one of my neighbors, to whom I had confided my problem, called me one morning and said there was a large ad in *The Record* that he thought would interest me. I answered the ad with a two-page letter, stating that it appeared the ad had been written specifically for me. My experience, especially in export, was just what they wanted. I received a call a day or two

later from the director of personnel. I went to see him and he became quite excited and enthusiastic. He thought my experience was unique. So he arranged a meeting with the president of the company.

The president went over my résumé in detail. I sensed that this man was highly controlled, extremely depressed. He was a small man, about 5'4", weighing about 130 or 140 pounds.

Q. For the record, Ed, how tall are you?

A. I'm 6'3" and I weigh about 225 pounds. I towered so high over the president that I kind of slouched my shoulders and shrank as much as I could. I hunched into the chair.

Q. Your posture is normally very erect.

A. Of course, but I didn't want to make this man feel ill at ease.

Q. Why do you say he acted depressed?

A. I can only say I sensed this. He seemed to be laboring under great tension, to be extremely controlled, and to be under great pressure. He was about 46. He looked sick. He looked pale, haggard. He shook slightly. He had a forced smile. He seemed to be quite insecure while pretending to be secure.

Q. How old are you, Ed?

A. I'm 46 also. He appeared to be ten years my senior.

Q. You saw him many times subsequently?

A. Oh, many times, and he was never any different. He always seemed to me to be under great pressure and also under great control. He was a cold fish. As a matter of fact, I found out some of the reasons why. I should mention that although he is now president of a \$65,000,000 corporation, his previous job was as president of a local \$6,000,000 company. It's almost as though he were afraid somebody would find out who he really was. But they knew. A man who worked for him in his former company later told me at lunch, "I would never work for that s.o.b. I don't see how you can either."

Well, the president told me at the first interview that

it was his feeling, despite the enthusiasm of the director of personnel, that their export problem could not be solved. Their ultimate solution would have to be to get out of certain overseas markets. Nevertheless he was willing to give it a try.

A subsequent meeting was set up for me. I attended that meeting late one afternoon. Present were the president, two senior executives, and the personnel director. Four of them; one of me. They fired questions at me from every angle. My previous employment, what I knew about the export field, how I felt about coming into a large company when I had only worked for a small company, my feelings about them.

I was quite open about my situation. I told them about my experience and that I had come to a cross-roads where I now sought employment with a large company. I said this sincerely. A large company offered satisfactions, a measure of long-range security, opportunity for advancement. I wouldn't mind committing myself to it.

At any rate, about 5:30 or 5:45, we reached the end of their questions and they asked me if I would excuse them and wait in the office of the director of personnel for a few minutes while they decided if they wanted to accept me in their fraternity. The kind of thing you go through when you are screened for initiation.

Q. What did you do in the next office?

A. I sat in there for about 20 minutes.

Q. And sweated?

A. No, I didn't sweat. I felt very fatalistic about it. If the decision was positive, I'd accept it. I had asked them for between \$25,000 and \$30,000. Finally, the director of personnel returned. I said, "Where's everybody else?" He said, "They went home." I thought to myself, that's strange. Here they're hiring me for an important job in the company. Somebody who will have to sell their product in world markets. They wanted to hire me, and yet they had all left. Well, the president

had given the director of personnel a dirty job. They offered me \$21,500, take it or leave it.

Q. And they didn't stay to see if you'd take it or leave it?

A. No, they didn't stay to see what I'd do. Or discuss it or congratulate me, or anything. They sent him in and he said, "I'm very unhappy about what has happened, and very uncomfortable, but it's my job. They offer you the job at \$21,500, take it or leave it." It was a kind of rude introduction to this company, even though I felt warmth for the director of personnel.

I said, "I'd like to think about it for a day or so and get back to you." He said, "Our need is immediate. We want you to start at once." I told him I'd give him my answer tomorrow. I went home, thought about it. I made a list of the pros and cons. I figured it would be for a year at the very worst. I would get invaluable experience, which I had never had before, as a major executive in a \$65,000,000 company. I needed the money. I had an immediate financial problem, and a severe one. The \$21,500 would permit me to survive, although not in any degree of luxury. I took it. I started the following Monday.

Q. What were the arguments against it? What were the clues that made you wonder?

A. The president of the company was a cold fish. A man with whom I did not feel at ease. A man who did not inspire in me any feeling of confidence or devotion or loyalty, and who entered the first interview on a negative tone. His attitude seemed to be, "You're nothing to me. I'm far superior to you. I really don't care about you. I don't really think you're going to work out. I have so much money that I can give you a chance to hang yourself. Take it or leave it: you're on for \$21,500."

Q. Did you feel you could win him over after he saw your work?

A. I felt that there was that possibility. Let me say parenthetically that the director of personnel assured me that a halfway decent job would call for an increase in pay. He tried to sell me on taking the job.

Q. Did he mean it?

A. No.

Q. Why did he say it, Ed?

A. It was part of their corporate disinterest in people. I found out shortly after I joined that this company had the highest turnover of any company known to personnel directors in the United States—35 percent turnover in a year.

Q. 35 percent of everybody?

A. Of everybody in the company. The total population of the company was replaced every three years. This was a company which employed several thousand people.

Now shortly after I joined, I found a very interesting opportunity to increase our sales in Latin America by changing our distribution. The next time I had lunch with the president, he said, "I want you to run your operation as though it were your own business." Well, I described my suggestion to increase our Latin American sales. The suggestion that I introduced so diplomatically was the first thing I would have done were it my own business, but he said nothing. He didn't say yes. He didn't say no. He didn't even react.

Q. He never said anything? Did he nod? Did he say he'd think about it?

A. He made no response to that suggestion. No reaction whatsoever. Didn't respond to it at all.

Q. This was the first warning you were in for trouble? How long was this, Ed, after you came there?

A. Two or three months.

Q. How did you react to this?

A. I felt as though I had been slapped in the face with a wet towel. I felt rebuffed. I felt that I was really giving them 150 percent of myself. I wanted very much to do a good job. As much experience as anyone in the world could bring to bear. As much intelligence and interest.

Well, let's say I have been around enough so that I am not shocked by anything. I was more disappointed and surprised. I felt bad for them. I had heard that they had a 35 percent turnover, and now I could see

why. The president was so cold, so negative, so unappreciative. He didn't say, "Ed, I know you're right." He didn't say, "I appreciate your sincerity and genuine interest in the company." His negative manner told me in a very crude way to toe the line. That is, to forget it.

He's been with the company long enough to be financially secure, and you would think he would have enough security to be honest. Instead, he showed coldness and brutality in handling people. I saw infinite evidence after that. He had told me when I joined the company that I would be eligible for a substantial raise at the end of six months. When at lunch six months later I reminded him, he denied ever having made the statement and lit into me with ferocity.

Q. How are you so sure he had said that? Had you read that into something he had said?

A. Because it had been a plain, bald statement. "After six months you'll be eligible for a raise."

Q. You noted that in your diary?

A. Of course I did. I make notes on everything.

His answer was even more negative than anything I could have imagined. He said to me, "Ed, I'm afraid of you. I'm afraid of any man who would do harm to himself. You are doing harm to yourself by carrying monkeys on your back. You are carrying deadwood in your department." Mind you, I had already turned over 17 people in the department out of 75. He thought that firing 17 people wasn't enough; that I should fire even more. There were certain borderline cases. I felt that another mass firing would destroy the morale of the department. I had held off firing them. I planned to replace them one at a time. Well, his position was so extreme that within the next few weeks after that, I fired three key people. It rocked the department to the core.

Q. You did it against your own best judgment?

A. Against my own best judgment.

Q. Why did he want you to do that?

A. I think it was a desperate searching for Band-Aids. The international division was, and still is, in serious trouble. It is facing tougher competition from West Germany. It is facing currency restrictions. It is facing restrictions from nationalism. It loses money. It has weak management. Its weak managers are being pot-shotted daily by this president. He was looking for a scapegoat, and it was as if his subconscious were saying, "If you'd fire these people and hire new brooms, maybe something will happen to straighten out this sick division." But I knew damn well that the problem was bigger and more complex than that.

Q. But you fired them. What was his reaction to that?

A. He had no reaction. He didn't call me up and say, "Ed, I respect you for what you've done." Nothing. Absolutely nothing. So I wrote him a memo.

Q. What did he say then?

A. It was kind of like, "Well, we'll see." As though nothing I could do was right. It was as though he hadn't suggested it. As if it were my idea and he would wait to see how it would work out.

It didn't work out well. One key man I fired could not be replaced for two months. And let me tell you, during those two months there was chaos.

Q. You were pressured into following his judgment instead of your own, and chaos resulted. You would not have done it that way?

A. No, I would have done it in a more orderly and planned way and covered myself before exposing myself. I should mention something else. In October, the president made a move without telling me. He ordered us to withdraw from three countries where we had been selling. Then he transferred the credit unit back into the domestic division. Now, if you are a division executive and your superiors decide to take one of your sections and move it elsewhere, out of courtesy and nothing else, or as an attempt to keep you an effective member of the group, they would discuss it with you in advance. The first warning I had was when the

domestic credit manager called me and said, "Oh, by the way, you know we're transferring these people on Monday."

Q. What did you say?

A. I said, "No, I didn't know."

Q. How did you react?

A. Of course, on the surface, I made light of it. "Well, that's what the boss wants." But I felt terrible. I felt awful. I felt bad personally. I also felt sad for the company, and for him. Here was such a marvelous chance to integrate me into the company and get me on his team. If he wanted to do something intelligently and constructively, I would have helped him in every way I could. But he made such an absolute mess of things that I can't describe it. He transferred the people without considering the company's interests. Within a matter of two months after that, all of these people had left the company.

After this first move, I saw handwriting on the wall six feet high that said, "Ed, this is a warning. You had better be prepared. You are not secure. People are not saying what they mean."

After the second move in that same direction two months later, I went to the president and I said, "Does this mean that you have made up your mind to cut down my responsibility?" He said, "Not at all. We were pressured into the moves. It doesn't represent policy. Don't worry about a thing." Nevertheless, each month after that I received another call from another executive who said, "Oh, by the way, we're taking our people out of your division on Monday. It has the boss's okay." And he never said a word. He never said one word, almost as though he were either afraid, or didn't care.

Q. When did you figure your job was about to go out the window?

A. I got the idea early in the second year. Of course, after I was rebuffed so crudely when I asked for a raise, I got the impression that things were not going well for

me. After they started chopping at my department, I wondered if I were on the way out. I sensed that it could not last forever. Come September, the president called me in and said, "Have you been looking for a job?" I said no. He said, "You'd better start." That was the sum total of their notification. He said, "This doesn't represent any fault of yours. I don't know if God Himself could have changed things. You know, Ed, we are about ready to give up on export sales. There doesn't seem to be any other course."

I didn't see fit to say to this man, "You s.o.b., why didn't you have the common decency and courtesy to say that this was being done, to spare me the embarrassment of hearing it from strangers? Consult with me, use me, seek my advice, my guidance. Exercise the minimum of business courtesy, decorum, consideration." But nothing. Nothing. It was as though he didn't give a damn.

Q. What did you say?

A. He said, "Since this is no fault of yours, we will lean over backwards to be fair to you. So you can take as much time as you need to relocate, anyway till the year is out." I thought that was fair, and I didn't want to rock the boat. As long as I was going to leave, it would do me no good to spit in his eye and be out on the skids the next day.

Q. So you kept your mouth shut?

A. I kept my mouth shut. I said, "That's very fair of you. Thank you very much."

From that point forward, I started looking. From that point forward, the signs accelerated. They hired a replacement for me within another month. The replacement was not a replacement. He was a young administrative trainee from one of the other companies in town.

Q. What did they tell you when they hired this replacement?

A. They didn't tell me anything.

Q. He just turned up one day?

A. No, I heard from other people that he had been hired. Every other executive in the company was invited to a luncheon, and I was the only one who was not invited. Then I was told on a Friday that he would report to work on Monday morning, and I should take him under my wing and turn the reins over to him as rapidly as possible. So I accelerated my search for employment. I spent as much time as was necessary to train this man and to supervise what remained of the department. The balance of the time I spent seeking employment.

Q. Tell me, Ed, what was happening within the office at this point?

A. When this young fellow arrived on the scene, it was as though I had been placed in Coventry. My name was removed from the executive mailing list. I received no calls from any of the other executives in the company. Nobody spoke to me. It had become public knowledge around the company that I was being drummed out, as if I had disgraced the company in some way. But I had done nothing but to perform the most sincere job of which I was capable.

Now, I had a few friends in the company, including the director of personnel—

Q. What happened to him? Was he keeping you posted?

A. When I would call him, he would profess ignorance. Finally, when the break occurred and I called him to tell him, he said, "Yes, Ed, it's very unfortunate and very sad. I'm sorry it turned out this way. I certainly didn't expect it would, and I didn't want it to."

Q. What happened to you during this period of ostracism?

A. They didn't invite me to meetings. They stopped sending me copies of their memos, abruptly, as though I had died. My friends looked out of the corners of their eyes when they spoke to me. They came into my office and closed the door, and then they confessed their horror at what the company was doing. How crass and crude the company was, and how miserable to treat any human being like this. How unfortunate it was.

How they wished they didn't work for the company. And so on.

Q. Did you ever run into any of them in the corridor?

A. Yes, whenever I ran into another executive, it was hail-fellow-well-met. They'd say, "Hello, Ed, good to see you," just as if nothing had happened. They were embarrassed because they knew and I knew. It wasn't as if they had any personal animosity for me. They were taking their cue from the president. I was red hot.

Q. Did you ever run into the president?

A. I passed him once or twice in the hall. He nodded coolly and said nothing.

My successor was already there. I was still on their payroll. By their leave, I was out looking for a job. Then in November, the president called me in and said, "It has come to my attention that you have been conducting personal business on company time. I think it would be for the best interests of the company if you left now." He handed me a check for the balance of my salary plus two weeks of vacation.

At this point my patience finally collapsed. My answer to him was, "I haven't done anything detrimental to the company, and I will not be treated in this manner by the company, by you, or by anyone else. You have made a commitment, and I expect you to live up to it." He seemed suddenly embarrassed when I put him on the spot.

Q. What did you want from him?

A. In my search for a job, I was telling people that I was still employed. I would be hampered if I suddenly became unemployed. I told him that. I said, "I have many things in the works, and many people are calling me here. It would be very embarrassing, and would handicap my job hunt, if they discovered I am no longer in the company. I want an office, and I want somebody to answer my phones." He backed down and agreed to continue my office, telephone, and secretary for as long a period as I wished. I needed it for about three months until I was hired elsewhere.

Q. Was that your final meeting?

A. That was it. I never saw him again. He never sent me a note.

Q. You just didn't come in?

A. The day I started my new job, I just disappeared.

Q. Ed, looking back, it's apparent that they treated you in an inhuman fashion. But what mistakes do you think you made? What would you have done differently? What did you handle poorly? What could you learn from this experience if you were to start all over again from the beginning?

A. I could have tried something different, although I don't know what. I can only say that other people in the company apparently were able to get along with the president.

Q. You couldn't. You tried.

A. Well, I can tell you that my successor has achieved some success at it. I tried as hard as I was able to cater to the president and his vanity. I tried to make him feel smart, secure, intelligent, dominant, brilliant.

Q. Why were you unable to succeed in the job?

A. I found conversation with the president very difficult. When I was in his office, it was not easy for me to indulge in small talk. Although other people told me that he just did not engage in small talk. Two of them told me they had suffered through a whole lunch with him, and heard him say nothing.

All of his moves seemed to be done boldly and with great confidence. All of them were lousy moves, but he made them with apparent confidence. He acted like a seer and a sage.

Q. Why did the others get along with him?

A. I thought a lot of the others were inept, and therefore didn't threaten him. Maybe he was conscious of the fact that I had more export experience. In some way, I must have threatened his opinion of himself and made him feel uncomfortable. From the beginning, I felt tremendous tension and coldness.

Q. Would you have done anything differently?

A. The only thing I might have tried was to butter him up a lot more than I did. I don't know that the whole situation would have been any different if I had been the most brilliant man in the world.

Q. Or might have been worse?

A. Probably. It could have been worse than it was. I would say that I cannot measure the toll on my body. I cannot measure if this has shortened my life. I went to the gym regularly to take care of myself through this period of stress and strain. I tried to combat it with sufficient rest and diversion.

But I did suffer. I was unhappy. I felt this pall of unhappiness around me all the time. I felt that no matter what I did, no matter how I tried, no matter how I worked, whether it was days, nights, or Sundays, it would go unappreciated, unwanted, unnoticed. They didn't give a damn, and yet I couldn't *not* give a damn. It affected me. My wife described it like a velvet fog. I felt as though I were walking around under a wet blanket all the time. I felt unhappy. I wasn't born that way, and it's not my general manner. On this new job, I am as different now as summer from winter.

Q. What advice would you give to anyone who was caught in a situation like this?

A. It's like the story they tell about orange juice as a contraceptive. The man says, "Should we take it before or after?" The doctor answers, "Instead." If you can avoid taking a job like that, take something else instead. Although, had I to do this over again, even knowing what I would go through, I still might have taken it. Because it solved a desperate financial problem, and it served as a bridge to what is now a happy situation. Put it another way: if I knew how to avoid it, I would avoid it. I wasn't able to avoid it. I sailed through it, and I survived with a few more gray hairs.

Ed Wendall had four clues, but the only one that was critically significant came at Ed's very first meeting when

the president said he didn't believe the company's export problems could be solved. Nevertheless, he was "willing to give it a try." Ed and I discussed this clue in retrospect, and he agreed he had missed its significance. Now, he said, it seemed pretty clear that the president had been convinced before Ed came along that export couldn't be profitable and that the company should get out of overseas markets. That meant that if Ed failed to improve their overseas sales position the president would be proved right and would have sufficient justification for closing down the department and getting rid of Ed.

"I didn't worry about this possibility," Ed told me in our subsequent conversation, "because I was sure I could produce results. What I didn't realize was that if I were successful, I would, in effect, prove the president wrong. I thought he would be happy to be proved wrong, as long as sales and profits increased. That only shows how innocent and naive I was."

"He really didn't want improved sales and profits?" I inquired skeptically.

"Of course he wanted them," Ed replied. "But not if it meant that his judgment would look bad as a result. That's where I went wrong. He had already made up his mind and gone out on a limb, and here I was sawing it off."

I tried to console him. "Don't start feeling sorry for yourself, Ed. You learned a lot. Next time, you won't make the same mistake."

"But why didn't I see it the first time? I suppose," he philosophized, "I was so concerned with getting the job that his opinion of the job—not of me, but of the job itself—didn't seem important. Just to show you how blind I was, I sensed the first time I met him that this man was frightened to death. Instinctively. I didn't deliberately plan to shrink into my chair like that. I suppose I just sensed that I ought to, without realizing why. I must have known that he was frightened. That was clue Number Two."

"I should have been the frightened one, not he. I was unemployed and I needed that job. He was the boss."

He had everything. But I was relaxed, and *he* was tense. If I had been on my toes, I would have known that a man like that didn't need me to prove him wrong."

"What were the other signs you missed?" I asked Ed. Could he recollect them?

Yes, there were two more clues even before he had been hired. One was the president's rude departure before they offered Ed the job on a take-it-or-leave-it basis. And the final clue was Ed's discovery of the abnormally high personnel turnover rate in the company. Did he have any reason to assume he could beat the odds?

These were four strong indications of probable difficulties for Ed; yet he saw none of them.

All Ed saw after months of unemployment was a job and an income. He didn't see the storm warnings because he had the typical executive's confidence in himself and in his ability to succeed. It was unquenchable. And it was equally inconceivable to him that success could be as dangerous as failure.

Today, Ed Wendall is a wiser man. He sums up his lesson in one sentence: "If the boss wants you to fail, you won't save your job by succeeding."

But there's another lesson Ed never did see and did not learn: "When the boss is dealing the cards, play the game by his rules or get out of the game."

The president had already decided when he hired Ed that the job was, in effect, temporary, for a year or two. Ignoring the warning signs, however, Ed regarded it as a permanent position and began to think and act accordingly.

But if he had played the game by the president's rules, he too would have regarded it as a temporary position. He would have stepped into the breach, done the best job possible, but never cherished any illusions as to his tenure.

He would then have assumed that it would be only a question of time before his own dismissal. And he would have continued his search for a permanent position all the while. It would not have been easy. He would have had little time for interviews, but he would have had

some. He would have found it impossible to make open contacts with possible employers, but certainly in two years he could have arranged some private meetings. He could have contacted employment agencies and executive searchers; he did nothing.

The warning flags were flying; yet Ed Wrendall didn't want to see them because they were unpleasant. So he deceived himself into thinking he had achieved a permanent spot.

He couldn't change the situation. But how much better off he would have been had he taken the position with eyes wide open, never deceiving himself for a moment.

Deception is always bad, but self-deception is worse. It cost Ed Wrendall a lot of gray hairs, and even after it was all over, I'm not sure he learned his real lesson.

CHAPTER 6

Strategy for Survival

WHEN you get caught in a pincer movement, with rival enemy battalions flanking you on either side and the boss attacking you from the air, it's easy to forget all the good advice you received from well-intentioned friends. After all, the next mortar shell may land squarely on your desk and blast you out of your job. A well-directed memo or phone call in the executive suite can often do just that with the power of a high explosive.

But when you are fighting to hold your position, panic won't help. Nor will improvised tactics. It isn't enough to anticipate your reply to your rival's barbs tomorrow morning. What about the morning after that, and next week, and next month?

You need a long-range strategy precisely like a military battle plan. You need an analysis of where you stand and where the enemy stands, the forces at his disposal, and your own. You need alternatives to cope with unforeseen contingencies, for your rival won't always act according to your expectations.

Such a strategic plan isn't difficult to prepare if you can think objectively about your tangled situation. It reminds me of my high school teacher who, when he gave us an examination, would say, "The questions are easy but the answers may give you some trouble."

How can you be objective when bazooka shells, in the form of interoffice memos, are bursting around you? Dan Brashears did it, and his story clearly shows the alternative to despair and panic.

Dan is a well-known and experienced public relations man in New York. He began his career as a newspaper reporter, switching to public relations work only when his newspaper merged and he couldn't find another job.

As is the custom in the public relations field, Dan worked as an account executive for several major agencies over a 15-year period. Then he joined the staff of the public relations department of a medium-size advertising agency. From the day he was hired, and actually even before that, problems began to arise even though he didn't see clearly what they meant or what he could do about them. But he learned fast:

Let me tell you about my experience at the advertising agency. It was a well-established, conservative agency, owned and controlled by Arthur Lindsay, for whom I have the greatest respect. He's a nice man. But he is what I would call a typical WASP [White Anglo-Saxon Protestant]. I'm referring primarily to the type of people he wants around him. To a great extent they all come from the same background. He lives in Weston, Connecticut. I think that about spotlights the situation. He's a yachtsman. He's an Ivy League type although he didn't go to an Ivy League school. He came from a wealthy background. In fact that's how he got to be head of the agency. He bought in heavily and took control.

It was said around the agency that Mr. Lindsay felt he himself was limited. I understand that there were people who had practically said this to him. He may have been bruised a few times in his life. He was not an inspiring leader. He was not an overly creative man.

The people who were there to begin with were in his mold. After he took over he hired no one without screening him through his personnel manager. In later years the story came back to me that some very fine creative people had been screened out by this man because they didn't fit the Ivy League image.

The people in the agency's management are not exactly hard-driving people. They're not scintillating from a

mental viewpoint. I think Mr. Lindsay was afraid of people with tremendous drive and tremendous creativity. I might add that he had good reason to be, because during my first year, there was a rebellion headed by a "Young Turk," a man who had been one of the youngest colonels in the Air Force during World War II. This overly ambitious and capable man almost took control of the agency by organizing a dissident group. Mr. Lindsay headed them off at the pass at the last minute. I think this shook him up and probably verified his own insecurities.

Following this incident the ringleader resigned and after that there wasn't much personal warfare among the staff. There was probably less than the usual amount of friction you'd find in an advertising agency where you have men with drive, creative talent, and in a hurry to go somewhere fast. Some of the younger ones were in their late 20's and the oldest was in his early 40's.

I remember my final interview with Mr. Lindsay before being hired. Instead of interviewing me in the office, he asked me to join him and several agency V.P.'s late one afternoon for a drink. During the conversation he turned to me and said, "Dan, what are your interests?" I told him skiing, swimming, legitimate theatre, and photography.

There was a pause, and he said, "You know, Dan, I just don't have you figured out. I don't know what kind of a fellow you really are." I really don't know what I should have answered. Perhaps I should have said tennis, riding. It may not have been those either. He may have sensed that perhaps I didn't fit the image he wanted in the agency. I don't know exactly what image he was looking for but it might have been the kind of people who wouldn't threaten him. I am, I suppose you would say, a fairly strong personality. I say my piece. I don't get pushed around. I try to be professional in my work. I do my job.

Well, half an hour after I returned from this session, much to my surprise Mr. Lindsay called and told me I was hired. They had previously had five or six men in that post in the same number of years. He didn't tell me

that. He just told me that my predecessor didn't get along with anybody and didn't have the capability for the job.

Later I found out that my predecessor was not as unqualified as they would have had me believe. They told me he was an irrational, excitable type so I had hesitated to call him for information on some pending projects. But when I did, I discovered that he was not an excitable, nasty person but was quite reasonable and willing to help me. This was within several weeks after I was hired. In my mind I began to question the integrity and the character of the people in the agency who had told me this. It sent up a warning flag in my mind.

But somehow I ignored these things because I wanted to believe that these people were playing the game straight. Well, I still had a lot to learn. I next discovered that Mr. Lindsay had lied to me when I first came in there. He had said, "Dan, you're going to be the Number Two man in this department." I learned later he had told the same things to several other men. He had then hired someone from the outside to become the Number Two man. When several of us got together and discovered this, one of them became so angry at Mr. Lindsay that he kept a silver-plated hand grenade on his desk—deactivated, of course—and he often "joked" what he'd like to do with it. Shortly thereafter, six or seven of the senior men left the agency within a brief period of time. I believe they comprised the best executives the agency had.

Not long after I joined the agency, Mr. Lindsay asked all of us to take a psychological test. I don't know if Mr. Lindsay took it himself. I thought nothing of it. I had taken them before, much more extensive tests than this. I tried to find out my results and as far as I could ascertain, I matched the qualifications first-rate on all counts. But after this test things began to change for me.

Lesser men were promoted from account executive to account supervisor over my head. This upset me quite a bit. I could never get a straight answer out of Mr. Lindsay.

Just a lot of double-talk. The excuses. "You just keep working, Danny, and do a good job. We've got our eye on you." Vague statements on which you could not hang your hat.

Sometime later a friend of mine who was an account executive at a small public relations agency telephoned me at home one night and said, "This is very confidential, Dan, but I handle the account of the psychological consulting firm that works with your agency, and I took the trouble to inquire. I happened to have access to the rating that my client gave to your agency. You were classified as a lone-wolf type who doesn't work too easily with people."

I was sworn to the highest secrecy. This person went on further, "You may be interested to know the qualifications of the people who marked these psychological exams. They were not staff psychologists. They were psychology majors in college, some of them sophomores and juniors." This really shook me up. At my previous agency I had taken an all-day intensive test and was told I had passed with flying colors. This was all the more reason to make me wonder if I was now with the right firm.

I had planned to make it my life's work. I had made important contributions to the agency and I had been given to feel that I had a great future there. But something had gone wrong in our relationship after the psychological tests. That's when the double-talk started. Much more was to come.

Soon after that, maybe a couple of months, the agency landed a new advertising account. It billed over \$4,000,000. The public relations and publicity came with it and I was assigned the P.R. part of the account. Bob Dana was the account executive assigned to the advertising.

Bob was about 37 or 38. Yes, he was also an Ivy Leaguer. Skinny. Tall. Married. I don't know what kind of a wife he had, but he was always complaining about her. For instance he once told me, "My wife had to go and

get herself pregnant." He accepted no responsibility whatever. It was her own fault, you see. He told me that one night she asked him if he had been faithful to her and he answered, "Yes dear, many times. Many times." That was Bob Dana for you.

Well, Bob and the agency brass went without me to the first client meeting. In fact, they didn't even tell me it was scheduled. Bob came in afterwards to report on the meeting. I was surprised by his emotional reaction. It was too strong. Too much steam for what should have been a normal client-account executive relationship. He bounced at me, "They're just a bunch of uneducated hayseeds. They act like a lot of old women."

My initial reactions to him were negative. What a damn fool to jump to conclusions like that about clients! I think that what he was really saying was that he found them a threat.

When I met them subsequently and sized them up for myself, I decided that actually the clients were extremely alert, not fuddy-duddies, very businesslike, very knowledgeable men. They were in their middle or late 30's. They were shrewd, decent, and well trained for their jobs. The only things "wrong" with them were that they were not yachtsmen or golfers.

Good work was the only thing they wanted from me. Somebody who does a good job on time, with the least amount of fuss and bother, who doesn't go running to them with minor problems. They don't want any personality problems if they can help it. I would say that I too don't want personalities to be involved, but I do, however, appreciate a friendly relationship.

I hit it up very well with them. I went right to work, set up an orderly and, I think, a well-thought-out program, and got rolling. I dealt directly with them, as Mr. Lindsay had told me to. The P.R. department of the agency was autonomous except that when the advertising side and the public relations side shared a client, we coordinated everything with each other.

But Bob Dana didn't like this. He was already fright-

ened by the client and he was even more frightened when he saw how well I was getting along with them. During the subsequent three or four months he started a series of minor attacks on me, mostly on the telephone. His main complaint was the memos I was writing to the client. "From now on," he told me, "I don't want you to send your monthly report to the client. Just send it to me, and we'll type it up."

He had a hostile tone in his voice which was quite unnecessary. He could have said, "I think it would be a good idea if you just sent it to me. Don't worry about the client, because we'll coordinate your report with ours." Something like that.

Almost everything he asked me to do was said in this aggressive way. Always I asked myself, why? It appeared that he was trying to prevent the client from knowing what I was doing. He was trying to make himself a buffer between me and the client.

I began to speak up and answer back. I'd say, "Why, Bob, I think it's much more sensible for me to continue to deal with them directly." I wanted to be reasonable but I felt that our existing arrangement, in accordance with agency policy, was all right. It was practical, time-saving, and businesslike. Our communications were smooth, quick, and easy. When a problem arose that directly involved the client I would phone the client and ask my question, get an answer, and go ahead. Great. The client and I were delighted. The other agency people had been delighted too, because why waste their time?

But I was realistic enough to know that Bob was responsible for \$4,000,000 in billing, and I was responsible for \$36,000 in P.R. fees. Quite a difference! So it made a certain amount of good sense to let him control things as long as he was really trying to do the best possible job for the client.

But Bob began to interfere and block things. He told me to call him if I wanted something and he would call the client. I would get a little irritated at this point and say, "For God's sake, Bob, that doesn't make any sense

at all. Why make two telephone calls and waste all that time when all I have to do is pick up the phone and get directly through to him?"

He didn't like this. Finally he said very coldly, with gritted teeth, "Look here, I want to make one thing perfectly clear to you. When I give the orders, you obey." I laughed. There was nothing else I could think to say except, "Cut the nonsense, Bob." This, of course, killed him.

He became very angry after I said that and he replied curtly, "I've already discussed you with Mr. Lindsay. You're forcing us to review our whole relationship here." A sort of hint he was going to try to have me fired.

I had never been pushed around to this extent. How many guys do you come across who have the stupidity to say, "I give the orders. I expect you to obey." This was real child stuff. I have never met anybody quite as heavy-handed as he.

That incident shook me up; and finally one night at home, I sat down and thought things through and where I was going on this job. Bob's sniping had been like the bites of a fly. Each time he would attack I would swat him back and that was the end of that. I reacted to the situation on a day-to-day basis. I had an off-the-cuff reaction. Tactics rather than strategy. Never did I think through clearly what he was doing to me and why or how I could best handle it. When you get pushed around this way and that, the mistake is not sitting down and working it out.

You know I'm a well-organized person. I have my files in good order and so on. So I applied the same talent to this situation, which was one of the most important business relationships I had ever had. I said to myself, what do I want? Do I want this job badly enough to fight this guy? Or am I going to let him get rid of me?

And I decided, I like the client; I like the account; I've had a fine relationship. The only fly in the ointment is Bob Dana. I said, okay, I'm going to use against him every damned piece of ammunition that I've got.

One of the other account executives, on the other hand,

said I should give up. "You can get yourself another job. Why get yourself in a turmoil? Dana is like that and so is Lindsay and so is this whole outfit."

I said, "Nothing doing. I may lose, but if I don't fight this I'll lose my self-respect. I'm just not going to let him do this to me." And I worked out my plan.

I told my wife that this would take time and a great deal of emotional effort. I said to her, "I'm going to try to keep it away from you as much as possible, but I won't always succeed." In a way, I was calm about it, because I knew exactly what I was doing and where I was going.

But I was also disturbed emotionally by it, as anybody would be. Even though you are very sure of yourself and know you are doing the right thing, nevertheless a battle like this hits you emotionally. It was very fatiguing. I was always worn out and I needed more sleep. I was drained. I felt myself dragging around.

But I knew when I started that this was how I would feel. Something has to be sacrificed and this is the price I'm willing to pay. It will be a temporary thing. My wife was with me 100 percent. She said she respected what I was doing and it was absolutely right.

So, for the first time in my life I sat down and worked out a detailed plan. I asked myself, where do I go from here? I thought of it in terms of a battle plan, just like S-3 drew up in the army. I wrote down what had happened, what Bob wanted, and I analyzed why he was acting this way. Writing it out helped me to put things where they belonged. I realized that in a business relationship it was just as important to put things down for yourself as it was to write a memo to the boss.

First of all I wrote out how I felt Bob Dana saw me, what he thought I was like, and then what I thought he was like. How exactly does Bob Dana feel about me? He feels threatened. Why is he so threatened? Because I have a good relationship with the client and he doesn't. \$4,000,000—and his job—are at stake. That's how he saw me.

I saw him as being essentially capable but too insecure to admit when he didn't know something. Too insecure to

let a good situation alone. A secure man would have welcomed my relationship with the client. He would think, "Boy, there's one area I don't have to worry about." But this was the one area Bob worried most about, because it *was* so good.

He wanted to have plenty of power but he was so screwed up that he had to get his kicks by pushing other people around. What was he trying to do? Bob had only two alternatives. Either he had to make me obey, as he demanded on the phone, or he had to get rid of me. And since I was not obeying, he had set out to get rid of me. Fire me.

How would he try to do it? First, try to put me in a bad light with the client. Well, that hadn't worked. He failed because they were familiar with my work and he discredited himself instead.

So I figured he'd go to Mr. Lindsay and try to get me fired as a troublemaker. How could I prevent that? By getting the client to prevent it. If the client wanted me to stay, Mr. Lindsay wouldn't have the guts to fire me. On the other hand, if the client wanted Bob Dana taken off the account, Mr. Lindsay would have to take him off. He probably wouldn't fire him; simply transfer him to another account.

So from that point on, having written my battle plan, I set out to give Bob enough rope to hang himself. I was going to put everything into memos, and every time we talked on the phone I was going to write a memo "confirming our conversation," with a carbon copy to the client. When I wanted to nettle Bob, I would put on the memo, "Copy to client." I would choose carefully something that logically should go to the client but that I knew Bob wouldn't want him to know.

I needled him to provoke him into an explosion. Any kind of an explosion. I just wanted to get at him. I wanted to keep him wild and upset and uneasy; off balance. If he exploded at me, the client would support me because by this time the client was looking for an excuse to get rid of him. If Bob exploded at the client, he would have to be taken off the account.

If he exploded about me to Mr. Lindsay, nothing would have happened because Mr. Lindsay was smart enough not to endanger \$4,000,000 in billings. So my strategy was to keep him off balance, keep him riled, because if I could bring it to a head, he'd be out and I'd be in.

I knew that I wouldn't be out because the client would protect me. If I was going to finish up in Bellevue, I was going to make damn sure that Bob Dana went with me. I had nothing to lose. I estimated this would probably take until spring.

The battle of the memos went right on to the bitter end. He was absolutely furious that in one memo to the client I discussed money. He wrote back a memo saying absolutely no memos like this must ever again be sent to the client. "Our expenditures are no business of the client." So I copied that and sent it to the client. The client was getting copies of everything Dana sent to me.

I knew there was ■ hazard. Even though the client respected me and didn't like Bob, he might get fed up with the whole thing. And that's why, during this entire time, I didn't phone the client if I could avoid it. I didn't bother him about anything. I tried to resolve as much as possible on my own.

But the client told me he was collecting a dossier on Dana and he asked me to fill him in. I felt clear in doing this. I really fought. I didn't fight dirty but I fought awfully tough. I realized it was a battle. Dana kept saying the client didn't want the memos. I called the client and said, "Bob says you don't want the copies." He told me to keep them coming. So I did.

At this stage Bob had to get rid of me, either by having the client turn against me or by pushing me into resigning. When neither of these alternatives worked, he was stuck with me. I drove him crazy. And the client had lost trust in him. He was completely discredited.

So what alternative did he have? He had to get rid of the account, right? In actual fact he needed to commit account suicide. Unconsciously he needed to get rid of the account. I didn't think he was secure enough to ask Mr. Lindsay to take him off the assignment.

So he had to make it look to the agency brass as if the client had decided to leave the agency, not Dana leave the client. In the latter part of September it began entering his conversations with me. He'd say, "I don't give a damn about this account. They could just as soon leave. I'd just as soon throw out the whole thing."

I could see what he was doing but he couldn't. And I was giving him all the ammunition he needed. On the 23rd of October he wrote me a memo, "The client has not yet approved the program we sent to them last month. I am a little worried. Should we propose additional public relations projects to excite them and stimulate a favorable decision?" In other words, he hoped to hit up the client for an extra budget. He was dreaming. He was on the verge of losing the account and he was dreaming about expansion.

The client kept delaying approval of the program and media schedule for next year. Finally Mr. Lindsay personally met with the client and made his pitch but they still didn't approve it.

Two weeks later the client called me at home one night. He told me they had decided to drop the agency because of poor work, but would I consider going with the P.R. account to their next agency, or else joining the company directly as their director of public relations? I said either was fine with me, whichever they preferred.

A week later Bob called me into his office and said rather casually, "Oh, by the way, we got a letter yesterday terminating the contract." He didn't blame me; that was the curious thing. So I said, "I am sorry to hear that," or something equally tragic.

"This needn't affect you," he told me. "You've always had a good relationship with the client. I'll be talking with him tomorrow and I'll put in a good word for you." The minute the agency lost the account, Bob Dana was suddenly relieved of me. I no longer threatened him. That's why, with complete sincerity, he could speak well of me to the client. He had no idea that the client and I had been in private conversation.

Then the client called me again and said, "Believe it or not, Bob recommended you very highly. And I told him I would give it some thought. I have now given it some thought, and how would you like to come with us?" I said fine.

My battle plan worked. Bob is still with the agency, and I'm with the client as director of public relations. Mr. Lindsay's billings are down \$4,000,000, and to this day I don't think he knows why. They told me he got word of the loss of the account when his yacht put into port after a vacation cruise.

CHAPTER 7

The Lonely Executive

It was the fall of 1954, just a few months after the Supreme Court's landmark decision in the case of *Brown v. Board of Education*, which outlawed racial segregation in public schools. Montgomery, Little Rock, Jackson, and Selma were still in the future.

In those crisp autumn days, two men's lives crossed in a rare coincidence. Perhaps it was a harbinger of things to come.

One of those two men was a young Negro school teacher. Seven years earlier he had been graduated from a northern college as something of a curiosity; he had taken his degree in business administration, the only Negro in his class to do so. But in 1947, he could not locate a company that would employ him, so he abandoned thoughts of a business career and entered teaching. The fall of 1954 found him teaching English in an all-Negro school district in a large metropolitan area in one of the border states.

The other man was office manager in a nearby manufacturing plant which was locally owned. Its large working force included some Negro factory hands and porters and one small section of clerks in the office.

The office manager was a most exceptional man. He was a thoughtful man, a deacon in his church, and an avid newspaper reader. He was typical of nothing and nobody. From what he saw, an end to discrimination in education was only the first step toward an end to dis-

crimination in other areas of American life. He described his life philosophy this way: "Find out which way the wind is blowing, and go with it. Don't fight it, or you'll be blown over."

But that was a rationalization. Within himself, he deeply believed that racial discrimination should end, and he believed that perhaps the Supreme Court decision gave him an excuse to do his own small part toward ending it. So he persuaded the factory owner to allow him to hire one single Negro as a supervisor, no less, in his department. Through a friend he heard of the school teacher, interviewed him, and hired him. The experiment worked, and 12 years later, the Negro school teacher who became the office supervisor tells his story:

I was not quite 30 when they hired me. I resigned my teaching position because this position seemed like a real opportunity. When I reported to work the first morning, the manager called me into his office right at nine o'clock. He headed the entire office setup. He had never before had a Negro working for him in a professional capacity.

After he said good morning, with further preliminaries, he asked me what did I think of intermarriage?

My immediate reaction was that I was in trouble right off the bat. I thought that I would probably have to go right out and look for another job because I wouldn't give him the answer I thought he was looking for.

Right at that point I had to make a decision whether I was going to be bowled over by this kind of thing all the time or whether I was going to face up to it now and get it over with.

You see, other sections of this department had a lot of white women in it and I knew he was saying to me, "Leave them alone." Because I was happily married, this was not a problem for me. But I thought he ought to know exactly where I stood on it. So I merely looked at him and said, "I consider marriage an agreement between two individuals, and it isn't anybody else's business."

I'll give him credit for this. He didn't pursue it. He re-

acted very well. I remember that he even smiled at my answer. Then he said, "Now look, I've told everybody that you're coming into the office. They should be prepared for it, and you shouldn't have any trouble. If you do, bring it to me and I'll take care of it."

Well, as you can understand, it was my first day on the job and I was full of vim and vigor and enthusiasm. I never shall forget it. It was a rainy day and we had a row of coat hooks in the closet, one marked for each man and woman. As I approached the closet to get my hat and raincoat I saw that someone had taken a crayon and written "nigger" under my name.

I had to make another quick decision as to what I would do. I had a choice of ignoring it, or raising a rumpus in the office, or I could go to the boss, the man who had told me to come to him if I had any trouble.

In a split second I decided that if I went in to the boss, he would probably investigate and give somebody a hard time. That meant I would never be able to get along with these people. On the other hand, I couldn't completely ignore it. So I turned around and went slowly back to my desk without looking at anybody in the office. I got a large eraser and I slowly walked back and erased it. Then, still not paying attention to anybody, I got my raincoat and went to lunch.

This was probably the smartest thing I could have done because after that I never had any trouble with anybody in the office. A few months later the boss told me, "I know what they think of you around here. Two of the women told me that you were the only gentleman in the department. Now we would like to know what you think about us." I told him I was finding my job challenging and satisfying. I made no reference to the closet incident. That's the way it ended. This man became one of my best friends in later years. Today, he never writes or talks to me without taking great pride in the fact that he was the one who selected me.

The insults are usually much more subtle. I can remember one instance where we had an office party for a man

who had just received a promotion. When the time came to leave, several of the men said they would have a couple of games of poker afterwards. Well, I'm not a poker player; I really wasn't interested. But, I thought, to be a good fellow I would do the courteous thing and say, "Good; I'll join you." But they completely ignored me. This taught me that they had no intention of including me in anything at any time unless it was strictly of a business nature.

Never up to that time had I been invited to the home of one of my business associates. Finally one night, I talked with my wife about this and said, "I have a theory that if you are going to have a friend, you have to be a friend. Let's invite some of these people to dinner." And we did. We had four or five couples for dinner at one time.

I could see their amazement, both in their spoken reactions and in their facial expressions, that Negroes could have this kind of a social gathering and could deport themselves in this way. They had just never seen it. They made comments like, "We've been to a lot of evenings like this but we've never seen one planned so well."

But out of that group of people, only one ever reciprocated socially for the evening they spent in my home. That one invited me to a church affair in his home. We enjoyed each other's company, and after that he and his wife exchanged dinner visits with my wife and me on a number of occasions. And this man made no bones about it to anybody because he had both the inner security and the economic security to allow him to do this.

Let me say this; I think it is important. I wish white people would disabuse themselves of the thought that Negroes are anxious to have social relationships with them. Negroes want social relationships with people with whom they have rapport and mutual interest. In my own case my wife and I have more social responsibilities than we can cope with as it is. You like to feel, however, that your business associates can accept you for yourself on a social basis.

After I had been with the company for about four years I received an offer of a job from another company. More money and a better position were involved, so I thought I would talk with my boss and ask him what my future in the company might be. And very kindly and gently he said, "I don't know. If the social scene changes there may be something better for you. If it doesn't change, I would doubt it." That meant that no matter how well I performed I would have no control over my advancement in the company.

This meant that I had another decision to make. It was not easy. My employment with this company had been given some publicity. The Negro community in town took some degree of pride and hope in it. I also felt that I had an obligation to back up the start that the company had made in hiring me as the first Negro executive.

So I decided to stay despite the fact that back in 1958 I had no assurance that the social scene would change. It was pretty frustrating and hopeless. It's the kind of thing that a Negro in America becomes accustomed to. "The American Way of Life." You have to deal with it. My father taught me that you can't jump out of a 20th-story window every time you have one of these experiences. You have to endure and forbear and keep going.

You don't forget these things. One that sticks out in my mind was an all-day business meeting. We had quite a pleasant morning session. We broke for lunch. I suppose there were 20 men in this group. I was the only Negro. One of the men in the department told a "nigger" story in my presence. I ignored it but I knew there would come a day when it would be appropriate for me to say something about it. That day came.

One day my boss called me in and lectured me on the value of patience and tolerance in race relations. I listened to him and when he was finished I said, "I don't think anybody needs to tell me about patience. I was at a meeting one day when one of the men told a 'nigger' story in front of me and used the word 'nigger' several times. This is the first time that I have said anything to anybody about it,

but if I didn't have a little patience and tolerance I would have pushed his teeth down his throat right at that minute. So I don't think I need any lecture."

One of the frustrations that a Negro endures is that he's never really sure that what happens to him happens because of his shortcomings or because he's a Negro. All during these last 12 years my pay has always been steps behind the actual job that I was asked to do. I held that first job for six years and nobody ever thought that it wasn't all right to keep me there indefinitely. I became bored with the lack of challenge. I saw the fellows who came into the company years after I did move on up the ladder and this began to fill me with certain doubts. I began to question my own adequacy.

So after I had worked for the company for about six years, I called the man who had hired me and asked him if we could talk. He very readily said yes. I told him, "You know, you have been the one person in this company that I can talk to about my particular problems. I see all the fellows that I came in with are moving on. It's getting so that I don't even know anybody on my own level. This concerns me.

"It seems to me that I know what management is thinking. They are not ready for me to supervise whites but not every job here requires that."

"Well," he asked, "for instance what?" And I told him. There was much more to the conversation, but I'll leave out all the gory details. He said, "I'm going to talk to somebody about this." In another two weeks I was called in and told I was being promoted to a staff job in the company. It was only this man's courage and confidence in me that took me out of the rut that I was in.

I have worked for some fair individuals in whom I have confidence. But you must remember that they are captives of the system. No matter how decent they are they still cannot really go beyond the confines of the society in which we live. In all fairness to them, I have to respect this. They are as much a captive of the society as I am.

Some companies are moving ahead of others in their

ability to look at Negro management people as people instead of just as Negroes. I know of one company that originally brought in a Negro management person to work in the special racial area. But they found that he had considerable skills and abilities and they have now put him in a top management job in an area which involves the whole operation of the business. I think this is hopeful.

I'm very hopeful about the entrance of young Negroes into business. I think it will be some years, however, before these young Negroes receive equitable treatment as far as advancement is concerned. Top management fears having Negro management people supervise white employees. The result is that they sometimes fail to take advantage of the talent they have in their organization. They will have to overcome this hurdle. I know of cases. When a Negro is a capable supervisor, it works out fine.

It is a fact that business generally tends to make specialists out of Negro management people. They create special spots for them. In too many instances they really don't let them dig into the guts of the business. In most of my career my responsibilities didn't call for me to hire or supervise any number of people.

I'll tell you a little personal experience of my own. I have a white secretary assigned to me. She's a young girl. For a while, she wasn't working out too well and this presented a problem to me. How would management look at me if I either mistreated this girl or neglected to ask her for her best performance? One day I called in this young lady. I said, "I know you can perform on this job. My reputation is at stake as well as yours. These are the things that are wrong." Then I listed them. I told her, "I would hope that you would correct them, and anything I can do to help you, I will do. But they will have to be corrected."

She took it in very fine spirit. She thanked me. I often wondered what was really in her mind. But when this young lady got married, she invited my wife and me to the wedding and we went. We were the only Negroes there. And I realized that I had a good relationship with

this young woman when her relatives came over to me and said, "You are Louise's boss." They were most effusive in expressing their appreciation and this made me know that it wouldn't have happened unless this young woman were proud to be working for me.

By this time, after 12 years, my own management seems to be satisfied with me. Now, every so often, they tell me of a job that is open and that they would like very much to interview some Negroes who might be qualified to fill it. While this is not my responsibility, I try to help.

When a young Negro college graduate comes to me, I tell him that there are some basic things he must understand, and those are the old trite thoughts of dedication to what one is doing: to understand that the job to which you are assigned may be trivial in your estimation, but to the guy who is paying for it, it isn't, and it's important to perform that job to the very best of your ability.

A Negro expects to be assigned to unimportant things. He thinks he's being assigned that way because he's a Negro. He has to have a different understanding about this to be able to maintain his enthusiasm and his loyalty.

And he must deal honestly with himself. He can't afford evasions and subterfuges like, "They're not treating me fairly because I am a Negro." He can't lie down in the face of a color handicap. If he were deaf or blind or lame, it would be just as silly to lie down in the face of his infirmity. He just has to try harder.

But I don't want to see young Negroes get confused between tolerance, patience, and their responsibilities. I know of a young Negro who was hired into my company last year, and from the time he got the job he griped continuously about prejudicial treatment. But I knew that he was doing poor work, which ultimately got him fired. Patience and tolerance is one thing but failure to perform is something else.

A man must have the right attitude toward his job and realistic expectations, too. Let me give you one case that happened a number of months ago.

A young fellow who had been graduated from one of

the big universities in June came to see me through a neighbor. He had been very popular with the white students and he had been elected president of his senior class over one of the school's most popular athletes. He came to ask me if I would help him get into my company.

I talked with him for a whole evening and then I told him frankly, no. He was a little shocked and he asked why. And this is what I told him:

"You would be getting into an organization where you would be associated with middle-class white people. You would find that they would give you a surface kind of welcome; that they would work along with you on the job. But you are going to expect them to be the way you think they ought to be, and they won't be. I mean, in respect to tolerance in race relations, the ability to be fair and objective in their appraisals, their willingness to be companionable to a Negro coming into the organization. You are not going to find this.

"You are not going to be willing to take these people where you find them and bring them as far as you can bring them. This will upset and frustrate you. It is something you won't be able to live with and I don't want to be a part of bringing you into this situation. I have pretty good reason to think that it won't work out for you."

You see, this young fellow was accustomed to socializing in the homes of his university friends. He was accustomed to being wholeheartedly accepted by whites in purely social situations. He wasn't going to find this in a job situation.

In my first few years of employment here, I was forced to hire no one but Negroes for my department. I always contended this was wrong and not a healthy thing from the standpoint of creating a competitive atmosphere where you get the best results. The people who worked for me knew I wasn't going anywhere and they knew they weren't going anywhere. This didn't create an incentive for the best performance, although I was deeply grateful for their personal loyalty.

We've been going through a period in the last few years

where every company in business and industry wants to prove that they have at least some token representation. First of all, they are looking for what I call "The Instant Negro." They want somebody who is all ready and prepared.

You take the Negro colleges in this country. They have had meager resources. They have received only a pittance of support from industry. They had to use those resources to prepare their students to get jobs. Certainly, right after World War II, the jobs open to Negroes were not in business and industry. When I got out of college those jobs were in school teaching, the ministry, and medicine. Consequently, the Negro colleges concentrated their resources in those areas. Those students who had the imagination to take business training found that business was not ready for them.

And now the recruiters go to these campuses, scouring around for people who will be instantly productive in business. They are surprised that they don't find such people in biochemistry or nuclear physics. This is just an unreasonable expectation.

I also suspect from my observations that many employers are looking for "The Bargain Negro." They are looking for really outstanding people whom they can hire at the same salary they'd pay an average or mediocre white. The Negro has to be better than anyone else to get a job at the same rate of pay.

The whole temper and tempo of the times have changed. Employers and the general white public cannot expect the tolerance toward segregation and discrimination that we have manifested in the past. I think this is all to the good.

The white executive who sincerely wants to hire Negroes cannot accomplish this by doing business as usual. He's going to have to be willing to experiment, to invest in the development of people. He's going to have to be willing to take some risks.

If this white executive is going to make any real impact, he must be willing to take those Negroes who have made

good records in other fields and take them into his company at a level that they can afford to come in. He's going to have to take the younger ones and bring them into the business and invest a little more in them than in the fellow who has the right background.

There's a good reason why he should. I believe that if we are going to keep the kind of government we say we want in this country, we can't do it with a slag heap of human beings. Business will have to pay part of the cost of making a large part of our population productive. Or else it will have to pay the cost of maintaining the human slag heap, the welfare costs, the crime costs, the costs that go into nonproductive human beings who become dependent on the government.

It is much less expensive for business to invest in these people to whom it has shown indifference and rejection over the last 100 years. It is much less expensive for the businessman to invest in making these people productive in society.

And from where I sit, I think that business is beginning to see this for the first time.

CHAPTER 8

Who Needs People?

CAN a corporation operate efficiently and profitably and still treat its employees with dignity and decency?

There are those who say it can't be done; that cold-blooded efficiency requires cold-blooded treatment of one and all.

Fortunately, they are in a minority. But there are too many executives who regard people as a small consideration. One such group saw their opportunity in a giant industrial corporation whose name appears on products you'll find in your own home.

The company was big, profitable, and in their opinion, tired. Its human character they regarded as hopelessly obsolete. After they bought control and merged it into their own corporation, they proceeded to apply their tough, cold-blooded methods.

A high executive, now retired, describes what happened when the new management took over and abandoned the company's traditional philosophy. He recalls how executive conflicts were handled in the old way and in the new, and he reaches just the conclusion you would expect him to:

Our company had always made money since its very start. Thomas Daniels started the company almost 40 years ago on \$10,000 of borrowed money, and he paid it off at the end of the first year. The only time we were in trouble was during the depression. You had to be a miracle man to escape that. We pulled out of that. All

of the years I was with the company, we made a lot of money. About every three years, we had a periodic reorganization, getting rid of the deadwood which every company accumulates. There was no lethargy in our organization.

Tom Daniels was the kind of a guy who was always five years ahead of everybody. One of his vice-presidents once said to me, "I can often win an argument with him, but damn it, he's usually right five years later." Daniels had more foresight than any of us, and he certainly prodded us to look ahead and to push the company ahead. He encouraged our initiative. There was a freedom of movement and individuality that gave a man a pride of accomplishment. It was a reflection of Tom Daniels, and it filtered right down through the organization. No matter where you went you found the same thing: pride in the company, people using their heads to do a better job.

It comes down to the way you treat people. You take the average person with talent and ambition—I don't mean to be head of the company—he has some personal pride of accomplishment. Tell the guy once in a while that he's doing a good job and he'll knock himself out. But constantly look for what's wrong with someone, and he just gets worse, because he thinks, "No matter what I do it's going to be wrong, so I won't do anything." Tom Daniels always kept reminding us to encourage people. That's the way he operated.

Any organization is a reflection of the guy at the top. Daniels was an individualist, and most everybody who worked for him was an individualist. He didn't hire "yes" men. You could sit there and tell Daniels any damn thing you felt like saying. In fact, he liked it.

I remember my first exposure to this. I hadn't been with the company very long when they held a branch managers' dinner at the country club, and a branch manager sitting at my table got drunker than a billy goat. Daniels was sitting at the head table, and all of a sudden, this guy said, "I'm going right up there now and tell Tom Daniels what I think of him." He got up and very carefully picked his way through this long room. He stood

there in front of Daniels and told him off for five or ten minutes. All the while, I was watching, scared stiff. I said to the fellow next to me, "Gee, he's going to hate himself in the morning." But Daniels just sat there and laughed.

The man came back to our table and sat there for five or ten minutes. Then he thought of another insult, and he went back up again. This never bothered Daniels; he promptly forgot the incident. He was strong enough as a leader not to worry about such things. To him, it was more important to let a man say his piece. He believed the man would appreciate the freedom and would give his best loyalty to the company.

Tom's director of marketing, Dick Coleman, was the same kind of man. During the war, he had been a salesman for the company in Los Angeles, and he was the first guy to break into the Hollywood studios with our company products. So Tom Daniels brought Dick back to the home office and made him sales manager at what was an unheard-of salary for those days.

Dick's attitude toward people was just like Tom Daniels'. Treat people decently, encourage them to do their best, and stand behind them. You found out early in the game that you didn't have to "yes" Dick Coleman. You could sit across the desk from him and tell him anything at all. You could argue with him, and he'd argue back with you. And sometimes you'd win.

After the war, when our company expanded, Dick needed an assistant, and he hired Homer Morris. Not a bad guy, but it was pretty obvious that Homer had no talent. He was a guy who never came up with an idea. Whatever had been done in the past was the way Homer thought it should be done. He was a great systematizer. If Dick had set up a thing in a certain way, Homer thought that was the only way to do it, because to him, Dick was a little tin saint.

I'll give you an example. When I took over the department, I found that we were carrying in our files sales records that went back 40 years. The files were coming out of our ears. This was ridiculous because after a few years, sales records are worthless. So I said, "Throw

them all out, and we'll set up a system whereby we'll keep them for seven years only."

So the girls threw them all out. Soon afterwards, for some reason, Homer came looking for a certain file. The secretary told him I had thrown them all out. So he came to my office and said, "Why did you do that?" I replied, "Because they were costing us money. The space is valuable, and we need it for other things." He said, "Dick Coleman put in that system in 1938. We shouldn't be changing that." That was Homer Morris.

But Homer had values on the other side too. He was meticulous about everything. And on top of that, he was ■ workhorse. He worked from early morning until late at night, maybe to compensate for his lack of talent. He had ■ complete office in his home. He was at his desk at eight o'clock in the morning and never left the office until six or seven at night, loaded with a briefcase. After dinner he went right upstairs to his den and worked till midnight. I used to kid him and say, "Homer, I can tell what time of night you wrote that note, because the later it gets, the sillier they are."

Pretty soon, a revolution started at the executive level below Homer. These guys thought Homer didn't know anything. There was one young fellow, Ed McDevitt, in his late 20's, who worked directly under Morris, and he was full of ideas. He wanted Homer's job. Downstairs on our floor was another guy who was in charge of a department. He hated Homer Morris with an all-consuming hate, because every time he would show him a report, Morris would find fault with it, usually without justification.

These two guys were trying to ease Morris out of the picture one way or another, mostly by propaganda and a whispering campaign. It seemed that they told everybody in the building that Homer Morris was a stupid ass. Ed figured that if he got Morris out, he would get the job.

Finally one day after long research, McDevitt and his *compadres* worked up ■ White Paper documenting why Morris shouldn't be on this job and why Ed McDevitt should have it. Ed went to Dick Coleman and started a long harangue about Homer Morris.

Now Coleman knew as well as anyone that Morris had limitations. In fact, he called him "Grandpa." But by this time, Morris had been with the company for at least 20 years; he had become more or less a figurehead. Dick knew that Morris' job was not critically important; it was a minor post, and he wasn't holding up the wheels of progress. Morris had worked hard, was loyal, and Dick felt a sense of personal responsibility to him.

So Coleman gave McDevitt a very simple answer. "Ed, you are using the wrong tactics. First of all, you are too impatient. Second, you are asking me to admit that I am making a mistake in having this man on the job, and therefore I don't know what I am doing. And third, never fight your immediate boss, because you have two strikes on you right away. And the third strike is me, because I'm not going to get rid of him on your say-so just because you want his job."

Shortly thereafter Ed McDevitt left, because he was through as far as the personnel office was concerned. He had put himself in a position where Dick Coleman could no longer trust him. They exiled him to the outermost reaches of the corporate empire, and he quit soon after. I think Coleman was right in what he did.

You remember 1948, when Truman unexpectedly beat Thomas E. Dewey. Daniels, like a lot of other hard-nosed Republicans, thought the world was coming to an end. He thought business was going to hell. I guess he thought Harry Truman was a socialist, and he said, "The country is going to pot."

Well, Tom Daniels was well along in years. So he decided to sell out and step aside. It wasn't difficult to find buyers; we were one of the largest factors in the industry, and three of our four divisions were rolling up big earnings year after year. Our plant facilities were modern and in good shape; we had an unusually large amount of cash in the treasury, and we hadn't missed a dividend since the depression.

We had only one important weakness. All our top executives were about the same age. Many had come to work with Daniels when he organized the company almost 40

years ago. Daniels himself had never trained anybody to take his job; I guess he thought he was going to live forever. The company was like an old-fashioned bank. You had to shoot your grandmother to get fired. There were no young men building up for leadership; there was no training program.

I'll give you an instance that didn't dawn on me at the time; it was several years later before I recognized its significance. At one point, they wanted me to get myself some help. So I found a fellow in Schenectady working for General Electric, whom I thought was a good man. After I had talked to this guy for a while and just about decided that I wanted to hire him, I phoned Dick Coleman and said, "I've got a young fellow here I'd like you to meet."

So we went over to Dick's office and I explained to him what I had in mind. This fellow did a lot of talking, and I didn't find it at all objectionable. Finally he left and Dick said to me, "This guy knows his job. But I'd be a little afraid of him if I were you. I just have a feeling that he's the kind of guy who would try to carry the ball when you should be carrying it. That's not always so good. You're the boss. This guy will work for you. He shouldn't carry the ball unless you tell him to. He came in too strong. This is dangerous."

It never occurred to me until some years later that this was the general policy of the corporation's executives. My boss built me up, but on the other hand, he didn't build me up. All the years I worked for Dick Coleman, he praised me to the skies to everybody inside and outside the company. But he never mentioned me to the real top echelon where it counted, to Tom Daniels and his three or four top vice-presidents. It was always Dick's operation. When we had some proposition to present to the executive committee, something of really top importance, we would outline it to Dick, and he would go alone to talk with the committee.

He had an ability which I think is essential if you want to get to the top in business. He would not get too close to the people who worked for him, so that if the

occasion arose when it was essential to get rid of somebody, Dick could do it. But he didn't show his toughness openly. He was a smoothie. A very, very smooth guy.

Once I sat in his office and listened while he talked with a man on the telephone. You would have thought the guy was his greatest buddy. Then he hung up and said, "That s.o.b." He was a good boss, a fair boss, but he only told you just enough to do your job, not enough to become any danger to him.

I had a close relationship with Dick. When I first reported to him, I asked him, "How do you want me to operate? Do you want weekly reports? Do you want copies of my letters and memos?" He answered, "This is your operation. My job is to help you. If you have trouble, come to me. If you want advice, come to me and if I can give it to you, I will. If you need the ball carried up to the top floor, I'll carry it. If you have any trouble with these characters that you can't handle yourself, let me know."

I worked for Dick for nine years, and he never once sent for me. He always came to my office. This was his way of treating me as an individual with a stature of my own. I treated my staff the same way. I never sent for them. I would walk into a man's office and talk with him on his own territory.

In the same way, all the top people in the company would come into Dick's office. It was part of the company style. I used to say, "Dick, you're just like a spider sitting there in a corner spinning your web."

The executives would come to Dick because they felt he had the Old Man's ear, and he really did. He also had the answers to a lot of their problems. He was a pretty talented guy in every respect. I think Dick Coleman was one of the best management men in the U.S. He had imagination and creativity. There wasn't any staff job that he couldn't do himself.

Meanwhile, for a year or so, Tom Daniels was talking with various interests about selling the company. Finally, he found a buyer, a corporation that wanted to diversify. The deal was worked out; they took over.

Once our company was theirs, of course, it was theirs to

do with as they wished. And the philosophy of the new management seemed to be to get rid of everybody who had previously been with the company in a senior position. The average age of these new men was younger; most of them were around 40.

These new guys had an attitude toward people as cold-blooded as I have ever seen. They turned everything upside down; fired people right and left. They would fire one man and bring in two people to replace him. So it wasn't a matter of economy. Their philosophy was, "Everything was done wrong until we arrived." A case in point was our Delaware plant. It had always been a very successful operation. They brought in a new manager who decided that nothing had ever been done right before he came there. He ran roughshod, not only over the people who had been there, but over the people he himself had brought in.

At headquarters they brought in one guy to take over from Dick Coleman as general sales manager. I'll tell you what kind of a guy he was. He had been on the job not more than three months when he called his home office staff together, the people who were in charge of running the field. And he said, "From now on, I want you to remember this, and mark it down chapter and verse: I am completely sick, tired, weary, and drained out from you bastards coming to me with problems, problems, problems. You've got nothing but problems, and all you want me to do is solve them.

"You have been hired, not to solve problems, but to create opportunities for this company. This company does not have problems. We have only opportunities. I don't want any of you ever again coming to me to discuss a problem. If you've got an opportunity you want to talk about, come to me and I'll be glad to talk with you."

Several days later, one of the product managers was pacing up and down in front of the new sales manager's office, peeping in to see if he had a frown on his face. He said to the secretary, "If you get him in a decent mood, I want to talk with him." Finally, the sales manager let him in and said, "Look, I'm sure you remember our meeting.

So what do you want to talk about?" He said, "Boss, I must talk with you. I have run across an insurmountable opportunity!"

With that kind of handling, the sales manager lasted just one year. They didn't like his results and they told him one Friday afternoon, "Clean out your desk. Your one-year contract is up." This was evidence of their "brilliant judgment."

There were a whole series of similar experiences after they took over. When they went to check on their new accounting managers, they asked me to go in with them. I took a look around, and after about two interviews, it was obvious that the head of the department was incompetent. It developed that it had been obvious to everybody since the day they put him in, a year or so before.

It showed in the fact that nothing ever got done, that the deadlines for delivery of completed work were not met. When you find deadlines not being met, this is really a symptom. The department head would constantly misunderstand instructions. He would very conveniently forget to order forms. He was just not sharp. He did not quite know what was happening. Everything was in a vague state of confusion.

And if you would ask anybody, "What does Mr. Ulrich do all day?" they would say, "Damned if I know." Which is also a symptom. "What has Ulrich produced?" I got for an answer, "Mr. Ulrich has produced 20 letters a day." On investigation, they were written by assistants for his signature. He signed 20 letters a day, which means only that he wrote his name 20 times. It was finally generally conceded that Ulrich was massively incompetent.

We would have many sessions where Ulrich was chewed out for one thing or another. The V.P. would yell at him unmercifully, "I will not stand for this. This is intolerable, Ulrich. You are a boob." He did not talk like a gentleman. He would scream at Ulrich at the top of his lungs.

This had been going on for a year or 18 months, ever since the new management gave Ulrich the job. Mr. Ulrich would be very meek and mild. He would say, "I'll take care of it right away." The vice-president would be

pacified just a little bit and then would scream a bit more to vent his spleen. But instead of firing Ulrich, the vice-president constantly protected him. He would say, "Ulrich is indispensable because he knows the system." Well, he did know the system, but it was a rationalization.

Why did the vice-president do it? Because he was by nature a bully. He needed somebody to bully, to yell at. And Ulrich was that man because Ulrich took it very quietly. To the vice-president, an efficient operation was less important than having a target for his anger and frustration. As for Ulrich, he should have yelled back or else quit a year ago.

Such was the quality of management the new president had brought in. This was their new way of life. What a change from the way Tom Daniels had run the company all those years!

We were moving toward the end of the road. Dick had long since been relieved of his responsibilities. Then the new president sent for me. I went up to his office and Dick was already there. The president turned to me and said, "I've just been telling Dick that we are going to do the same thing with your operation that we did with his. You two guys are going to have to handle your work without any staff for about a year."

So for a solid year, there was Dick Coleman and his secretary, and me and my secretary. We spent a year on this ridiculous assignment with no staff and no budget. Anything you wanted to do, "No." There was no money for it. Then came the kiss of death for Dick. They made him assistant to the president. This was a pattern. The president would make someone his assistant when he didn't want him around any longer, and then at the right time he would ease him out. Dick confided in me, "I don't know if I can last it out." I said, "Neither do I, but what can I do at my age?" I was 59 then.

I took over Dick's job of doing nothing. The president called me upstairs and said, "I don't know what you're going to be able to accomplish, because there's no budget. But I would like to have you stay with me." I told him I would be very happy to.

I was doing nothing. I spent my time coming up with ideas, writing memos, writing future plans. Nothing would happen to them. I was completely frustrated. Finally one day when I was out of town, Dick called me up and said, "I can't take it any more. I've asked the president for early retirement, and he has finally agreed. As of the first of next year, I'm officially retired. The end of the week, I'm going down to Florida and I'm not coming back." When I came back, Dick was gone.

The president asked me to "move up" and take over from Dick as his assistant. A salary raise would go with it! I traveled with the president wherever he went. But I was an office boy. I was a briefcase boy. I was getting more and more frustrated, and every night I'd go home and tell Jackie I couldn't take it much longer.

Finally the new fiscal year started, and the president sent for me. He said, "I don't know if this is good news or bad, but we are going to have to eliminate your job. We're putting you on early retirement. We are going to pay you in full until the end of the year." I caught my breath, and then I told him, "I don't particularly consider it bad news. I've been sitting around here for two years doing nothing, not earning my pay."

So out I went, and I'll say no more except this: When they took over, three of our divisions were making money and always had made money. Today, under their management, all four of our divisions are deeply in the red. The company hasn't paid a dividend in five years.

I think the attitude of the new management has had everything to do with it. They stamped out initiative; they stamped out morale; and they ordered you to produce, or else. Tom Daniels could have told them that people don't work that way, but of course they knew all the answers.

I was a prisoner of the machine, but I didn't get badly hurt. Nevertheless, I think our company's experience shows that a lot of what passes for "modern management" is self-defeating. When you come right down to it, isn't it people that make or break a company?

CHAPTER 9

In a Man's World

SOME executives begin their day by applying powder and lipstick. But the woman executive in American business is still something of an oddity. Outside of the fashion and retailing industries, a female can rarely be found in the ranks of top management.

There are reasons why and they have nothing to do with her ability or lack of it. In a man's world, the woman executive must work for a man and many men apparently don't find it easy to tell a woman what to do. She will most likely have men working for her, but surprisingly, this aspect of her position seems to create the fewest problems, to judge from my own inquiries. She will also work side by side with male executives of equal rank, all of whom will regard her as a deadly competitor for promotion.

The men with whom she works are overwhelmingly married. Many of them are also overwhelmed by being married and the woman executive is therefore also looked upon simply as a woman.

It's difficult for a woman to break into the management ranks but if she's physically attractive, she will find it easier to break down the barriers. So there are probably more attractive women executives than you would expect to find. And this results in more interesting problems than you would expect to find.

I interviewed two women executives of a large New York publishing company. They were quite different in personality and in their experiences but they had indepen-

dently discovered the very same way to get along with their (male) superiors.

Amy Dowery was the first to talk, followed by her friend Carol Lerner, who managed another major department in the company:

My boss was in one of his meanest moods. He looked up at me from the papers on his desk and snarled, "Why don't you wise up? It's getting close to bonus time."

I was on the verge of tears. I didn't say a word. I got up and quickly walked back to my office. I closed the door firmly behind me and put my head down on the desk. It was impossible to stop sobbing.

The relationship between Lou and me had become severely ugly. I felt that I was doing everything wrong. I had the feeling that I was picking up the phone and calling the wrong people; that I was handling my secretary badly; that I was bothering him too frequently. I didn't know what the answer was: to go to him more often or to stay away from him.

It was a terrible relationship. I sat there trying to pull myself together and wondering how things had come to this pass. It hadn't been this way at the beginning.

In the early stages of the job we had mutual interest and liking for one another. We had known each other in business for several years and he had hired me. In the beginning he respected me. I think he felt that I was competent.

Lou is a rather brusque man, to begin with, although he can be very sweet. He can be very warm and he can be extremely amusing and witty.

I guess we had a period of two or three months when everything seemed quite wonderful. Possibly it was a little more than that. Of course I was very dependent on him in the beginning because I had little experience in this kind of work. I needed his total guidance and total supervision and my ignorance was quite apparent. I showed my need by asking questions. It was very easy for Lou to guide me and to show me what was necessary. I was

actually going through an educational experience and we both knew it.

I am a quick student. I was getting the hang of how certain things should be done. After a while it was no longer necessary for me to go in and ask him certain questions about our procedures. I was beginning to figure out the answers for myself. In addition, I was establishing relationships with many of our writers. I was beginning to fly and I was beginning to show a certain amount of independence. I needed him less. Things were becoming somewhat routine. It was like a child coming out from under the mother hen's wing.

Lou soon began to show a certain amount of resentment about losing control over me. He needed to control me at all times. When I seemed sufficiently capable of functioning alone, without his guidance, I became a jeopardy to him in some way. I threatened him. He became obviously resentful because he didn't know how to cope with me. Certain men need to feel that a woman is dependent on them because it's the only way that they feel sure of themselves; I think Lou is one of them.

He became curt and abrupt and rude. He began to show his displeasure about my self-sufficiency, and I became very distraught about his attitude. So I coldly resolved to put on an act and make him feel I depended on him since that's what seemed so important to him. I decided to play the "little girl" routine.

I proceeded deliberately to seek his assistance and guidance. I can remember the morning. I first called him to ask if I could come and talk with him for a while. He said yes.

Well, I just scooped up absolutely every piece of paper on my desk about which I had any question whatever, no matter how minute. I said, "Lou, I am at the point now where I am snowed under. I don't know how to cope with it. I really need you to advise me about how to handle these various problems. Some of them are important and some of them are not important, so please help me to figure out what needs emphasis."

It was a legitimate plea but I was using it deviously so he'd feel needed. I think it was exactly what he wanted from me. He became kind; he became benevolent; he was delighted.

All of a sudden—no, not all of a sudden, because he vacillated for a moment—he entered one of his most gentle moments. He volunteered to take over some of my work because he thought that possibly my burden was too great for me to cope with alone. It wasn't necessary for him to do it but he wanted to help and he wanted to feel needed.

Well, after that, every once in a while when I found myself getting a little bit self-sufficient—God forbid!—I reminded myself that I was making a mistake. For a while I kept creating situations to go to Lou for help.

I did everything I could to make him feel superior. I went to some pretty extreme lengths. I remember when I personally developed an idea for one of our writers. It was an idea that I suggested to the writer and helped him with, all the way through from concept to publication. I wanted the writer to think that it had been conceived and originated by Lou, not by me. However, in a situation like this, people have a certain amount of discernment. You can't be the only person that the writer will contact if he wants a coherent answer, and then not get some of the credit. Nevertheless, when it came time to collect credit from the writer, my job, I felt, was to convince him that his was Lou's personal project. He finally gave Lou the credit. I felt relieved and Lou didn't feel threatened.

But it didn't work for long. Soon I noticed Lou was beginning to show resentment again. He told one of my friends at another publication that "women executives are hard to handle, but of course we keep a hand on Amy, and we know how to keep her in check."

This is a man who can show his displeasure by ignoring people or by being curt with them. I began to get rattled. I believed I wasn't doing the right thing; I was functioning inadequately; and maybe I was being stupid.

In one particular instance, I wrote him a note: "Whom do you think I ought to go to for assistance on this proj-

ect?" Earlier he would have replied, "Well, you should go to so-and-so," a kind of paternal instruction. Now his reply was, "You know how to do these things. Why are you asking me?"

My first reaction was that he was trying to tell me that by this time I ought to know the answers. But now I realize that he was saying, "I resent your self-efficiency for having gone this far without me. Now I want to throw it back in your face so that you can possibly make a couple of errors." A sadistic little trick. "If you really think you are all that good, let me prove to you that you are not." This is what he was saying.

Life became most difficult. Oh dear, it hurts just to think about it again. He was sarcastic, extremely sarcastic about my ability. These were snide remarks because not for one moment did I at this point consider myself a professional. I considered myself an eager and competent learner. But he had to show me viciously how inept I still was.

This went on for many months. I worried about my job. I really think I didn't have to worry, but I did. He never threatened that I would be fired. The worst was when he told me to "wise up. It's getting close to bonus time." This was a threat to my pocketbook but not to my job. I think honestly my nervousness about the job was more my fault than his.

Things were going badly and he was cruel in his remarks. They were quite, quite bad. I really wish I could recall some of them because they were lacerating.

Oh, yes. He has a whole bias against women in business. I suspect it's not just women in business; it's women generally. I had been out ill for a couple of days. When I came back he expressed all kinds of sarcasms about women in business, and of course, "They require more time off because they have to go to the beauty parlor. They have to be sick occasionally. That's why they are paid less than men," and on and on. When he is in a bad mood I know that his secretary is going to get it, or I am going to get it, or his wife had better watch out.

I was discouraged. I was feeling hopeless. I didn't know what to do.

Then one summer while he was on vacation, the company put another editor in his post for a month or so, just to fill in. That was Bob Strauss. In working with Bob, I discovered that, contrary to my previous opinion of myself, I apparently was pretty good. In fact maybe I was almost as good as some of the big-timers who were being paid considerably more than I. I began to develop more confidence. Finally one day Bob said he would like very much to have me work with him when he returned to his regular post.

At this point, when he came back from vacation, Lou reached one of his ugliest moments. He was vicious; he was devastating; and he was difficult. I didn't quite know how to cope with him. I got rattled and finally decided that working for him was just not worth it.

It's funny how you sometimes get to the end of your rope. You feel there is really nothing more to be lost in a situation. There was very much that I could learn from him but it had reached the point where it was not worth it any longer, even though he is very competent. He is one of the most creative editors around. But I decided that any benefits I could get from working with him were not worth the self-sacrifice. I was losing dignity. People need to feel valuable and worthwhile on the job in order to function.

Well, one day he got off one of his great sarcasms and I decided that was it. I had gone as far as I cared to in this particular spot. And even if it meant that I were out of the company, which I didn't think would happen, it was no longer worth it to compromise my personal pride.

The following morning I went in to him and said, "I don't know how much longer this can go on. I don't know whether the job is worth it." He said, "What do you mean?" I said that I felt the job was interesting and exciting; that I loved the magazine; I enjoyed working with him when he was in his better moods, but when he was in one of his evil moments, I couldn't cope with it. It was devastating to me. He was extremely sadistic. He was being evil, and I was surprised that it was necessary for him to resort to such tactics; to attempt to destroy someone's ego.

He listened to all of this, especially when I said I didn't

know if the job was any longer worth it. It was really a moment of truth on my part. I was saying, I need the job; I like the job; and I want the job, but not at the expense of my self-respect.

He then made one of his gorgeous remarks. He said, "I know you very well. I know what gets you to work best. I know that when I get vicious with you this way, it produces results. As evidence, just look at all the work you have produced in the last week. This is the most beautiful work you've done since you came here."

I said, "I don't know. I just have the feeling that if you're really interested in the people you are working with, there must be a better way to handle them. I consider you intelligent and I am astounded that you have to resort to such tactics."

"Well," he said, "sometimes it is absolutely necessary to stomp on people to get results."

I told him, "Yes, Mr. Hitler also got results, but only for a temporary period of time because you can't destroy people's morale and expect them to operate well."

He listened to all of this and he finally asked, "You really think that I could get the same results with more positive action?" I said, "Yes, I do." Speaking of moments of truth, I had the feeling that this was the first time he had seriously considered anything that I had suggested to him. And he said, "All right, I will consider this very carefully and thank you for mentioning it to me." We then went on into the business of the moment and it passed.

From that moment on it's all been changed. You know, he still gets into his wild moods once in a while. But he has never attacked me the same way. He has never again treated me quite so viciously. I don't know whether he has altered his tactics generally with everybody or only with me.

It was a moment in his life when he was doing a lot of self-examination. At least I had enough confidence in myself to stand up to him and to say, "You will not any longer beat me down this way." I think that perhaps he has now come to realize that people must develop self-sufficiency.

As much as he wanted to control me in the beginning, I think he now realizes that no one can totally control another human being. He has been very generous in certain ways since then. Last week he said, "Here is a project which is all yours. See what you can do from beginning to end. If you need any help, let me know."

Since my encounter I have had one very good raise, but that was because it was a raise period. I am in good shape now. As a matter of fact, another raise period is coming along and I know that I will do well.

Quite a change from the beginning, isn't it?

Well, Carol, that's about all I can say. You take it from here.

In my present job, I've encountered two different types of men. Two bosses. One followed the other. The first had hired me.

The minute I had walked into his office looking for a job, we seemed to click. I remembered vaguely having met him many years before although he didn't remember me. I had seen this man with many women in business situations and I thought he had absolutely no complexes about dealing with women.

His background was strongly religious and he was very much of a real family man. In the office he acted very secure and at ease around both women and men. He treated women almost as sisters or pals, but in a nice way. He never overstepped the bounds. This was a guy who was completely guileless. He was a little naive in some respects. If a guy and a gal in the office were seen together, I don't think it would ever have occurred to him that something might be going on.

When he interviewed me he was much more interested in whether I had talent than in the fact that I was a woman. He seemed completely secure, secure enough to say, "Well, this is a woman who can handle the work so I'll give her the job."

We worked beautifully together. This is what happens when you find a boss who is really for women. If you've

got talent, boy, this is it! You could go anywhere as far as this fellow was concerned. You could have his job if you were able to take it from him. He wasn't nervous or afraid; he worked quite well.

But unfortunately, he was so pleased to find me, and if you'll excuse me for saying so, my talent seemed to fill the bill so completely for what he needed, that he immediately began to praise me to other people. He was pleased and proud with this find that he had made. His first thought was, "Gee, I'd like my wife to meet this gal."

So he arranged to invite me to his summer home in East Hampton. His wife was aware that I was coming. The trip was for business reasons. He had been out of the office for a week and I was bringing him a lot of reports I had been working on which he needed that weekend. Also, he wanted me to be, and this was his sincere feeling, a part of his family.

Well, I found immediately that his wife was not in any condition to receive me. My boss was about 40; he looked about 35. He was good-looking, a wholesome type, Ivy League, full of life, always on the go. His wife was short, rather stout, four or five years older than he. She looked a good ten years older. She was going through her change of life. She had a drinking problem.

When I arrived she made a terrible issue out of my being there. She didn't quite come out and accuse me of having an affair with her husband. Of course, if that were the case, the last thing he would have done would be to bring me out to meet her. But this didn't occur to the woman. She spent one whole night screaming at him while I was trying to sleep. I heard her hollering, "Why is she here? I want to know the real reason. Don't give me these excuses." I couldn't help but hear through the closed door. He didn't defend me in the least. He let his wife step over me completely.

Finally after a night of this, he got me alone for a moment and told me his mother-in-law was coming the next day. "My wife wants you out of here so her mother doesn't think we are having an affair."

It was most humiliating. Of course I offered to leave immediately, but my boss said, "Please don't leave. It will only be harder on Lucille." He kept making excuses for her. He kept apologizing for her. He said she was a wonderful person if only I would understand. His whole attitude was not one of blaming her but only himself.

I was humiliated and embarrassed, but I was also angry. I felt he had placed me in a position where I would have to quit. I felt that his wife would hound him until he would say, "I'm awfully sorry, but my wife says you just can't work here."

Well, back at the office on Monday morning I read him the riot act and let him know that I had heard what his wife had said. I didn't criticize his private life. I just criticized him for inviting me as a house guest.

He tried to appease me. This was a woman he loved, he told me, and he was going to spend the rest of his life with her, and so on. But he assured me that his wife would have nothing to say about whether I would stay or go. I'm afraid that's where I got snarky. I shouldn't have done it but I told him off. I said I had never spent a worse weekend. I really felt dirty after it all.

The fact is that when I first went to work for him, he had thought of me only as being a talented person. Believe me, I know he didn't have any other feelings. But after this weekend all of a sudden he began to look at me as a woman. Thanks to his wife. He was also mad at his wife, thanks to me.

Now this man had a very high moral standard. He was going to feel guilty one way or the other about this situation. If he began to feel estranged emotionally from his wife, and sympathetic toward me, he would blame himself for it. He would say to himself, "Until Carol came along, life was so simple."

I was now in a position which had become rather untenable. I knew that if I just sat still and did my work quietly, it would still not help when he began to feel guilty. It would only end up with me losing my job sooner or later. And it was perfectly innocent. That was the fantastic

thing about it. Here was a situation that really started out perfectly, and now I was sure that my days on the job were numbered.

But just then I got an incredibly lucky break. He was quietly promoted to another area of the company. It was a step ahead for him, a big one, and he was going places.

His successor, my new boss, was very insecure. His position with the company was not a good one. This was a sideways transfer for him, not a promotion. He was not doing too well in his work. He was not a strong man. He was the kind of man who gets to a certain level and spends the rest of his life there.

I never met his wife. He talked very little of his family. I have a feeling he was very bored. I gathered he spent a lot of time away from home with his buddies. Male buddies. He had a few of them hanging around the office. He was a great golfer. He would spend whole weekends just golfing. And I gather his wife wasn't too pleased because of his conversations with his secretary that I overheard. The gist was, "Your wife wants to know if you're going to be home tonight." That sort of thing. Just an intimation that things weren't too pleasant.

I think he didn't like women or he was afraid of women. It's very hard for me to distinguish between the two because sometimes it's one and the same thing. For whatever reason, he apparently felt that he needed the security of another man to back him up. He needed the companionship of another man which he certainly couldn't have from me. He must have felt it would degrade him to be seconded by a woman instead of a man. The only female employees he didn't object to were the female secretaries.

Well, the understanding had been made clear to me that I was to keep my job under the new boss. But the minute the time came for him to confirm the present setup, he backed away. He was scared to death of me.

Here he was. He had just taken the job. Now, for the first time, he has a gal working for him. I was only 27 or 28, which is quite young for a job like this. It was a big problem. I had already proven myself and everybody felt

I was doing fine work. In fact, I was already becoming known in the field.

Well, he hemmed and hawed and apparently he went to lunch with the personnel manager to figure out what on earth to do with me. He wanted to get rid of me. I gather they decided it would have been awkward to blast me out so the final decision was to let me stay right where I was.

The first week under the new setup—and remember, I was quite young—I shot the boss a couple of times. I came in with big ideas. I walked in and said, “Hi! I’ve got some suggestions for our Christmas promotional campaign all ready and done. Here’s what I suggest we do. What do you think?”

It was almost as though a strong wind had swept through his office and blown the poor man over. He was only about 6’4”, and weighed about 200 pounds. He pulled in his horns and said, “Wait a minute now. I don’t know if we want to try anything different on that.” So obviously my first approach wasn’t working. My previous boss had always been interested in my ideas and we could often disagree without any bad consequences. We had a good working relationship. But this strong wind didn’t work around here at all.

So I pulled back and waited a while until I could decide what to do. I learned that I had to tone myself down about five points before I could go in. I would quietly tippy-toe in and chat about irrelevant things, no matter how pressing and urgent the problem.

Because I had a man who was so insecure and who wasn’t too confident in his own job, for about a year I was forced to sell every one of my good ideas as his. First I’d plant an idea with him. I would let him check it out with his buddies. For a long time, he would run over to one of his buddies and say, “We’re thinking of doing this. How does it sound to you?” And if his old buddy said, as I’m sure he did, “Gee, it sounds fine,” then everything could go ahead. By this time my boss would be convinced the idea was his.

Say it would be time for a certain promotional effort.

I'd go in and ask a vague question, "Well, what do you think about the fall campaign?" I'd throw the ball to him until he got to the point of throwing it back to me. Because after all he didn't want to do my work.

I'd say, "How about those special booklets we're sending out for the magazine? What would you think about doing something like last year's?" "Well, I don't know." Then I'd guide him along and finally he'd say, "Yes, that sounds fine. Yes, you can do that. Be sure to put some golf clubs into the design."

"Yes, sure, Bob. I'll put some golf clubs on the thing." And you would sort of work with him until he arrived at the idea or the point you wanted to make. I learned that it was very important to make him feel that he was the source of my ideas. He had to be brought along so that he felt part of it.

I wasn't too happy giving him credit for my ideas. Also, it slowed things down an awful lot. We couldn't get important things done as fast as I would have liked. I had to plant a lot of seeds very early so that my ideas would take root in his head and get his okay by the time we needed it.

It wasn't efficient and it wasn't easy but I've learned to live with it. I've learned a lot of things. I've learned not to expect to find a strong man in business. I hope I don't sound bitter, but it's true. Most of the men I've worked for have been weak. You could knock them over if you breathed too hard.

Look at the bosses I've had on this job. The first one acted strong. Oh sure, he could work with women. Easy does it. No problems at all. I loved it. Then he invites me to his home for the weekend, and what do I discover? His wife wraps him around her little finger.

He wanted to be liked by women. I suppose it was even more important to him because his wife hated him so. But never mind; he was still trying to get her to like him. That's why he was being so "noble" and wouldn't leave her. He was afraid of her.

Look how he acted toward me. He wanted me to be

"part of his family." Why on earth didn't I see what that meant? I wasn't part of his family. I was his hired hand. I couldn't be part of his family. What he probably meant—but I didn't realize what was in his head—was that he wished I were a particular part of his family, namely, his wife. But he didn't have the backbone to do anything about it. I suppose all he wanted was to dream about it. Maybe he didn't even realize that he was playing with fantasy.

Then the second boss. The man I work for now. He's so weak about everything that he's afraid to make any decisions. He'd rather be with men. When he's staying away from home and wife, he's out drinking with his buddies. No women for him. As I said, the only way I've been able to survive with him is to act like a timid little girl who won't scare the daylights out of him.

What mistakes have I made? Lots of them. Little ones and big ones. I should not have accepted that weekend invitation to East Hampton, at least not on his say-so. Looking back now, I should have said to him, "Glad to come but I'd appreciate it if your wife called to invite me. Or maybe she could drop me a note." If I asked him, I know he would have understood. If his wife didn't invite me, I just shouldn't have gone. Well, sometimes you only learn these things after it's too late.

But I haven't made a mistake in playing the little girl role with my present boss. I'm sure of that. Let Little Carol act like a woman for one minute and she's through. Either he'd have a coronary or he'd run for his life. But let me act like an innocent, timid little virgin and everything is fine.

That's my Number One rule for a woman to get along in business. If a gal doesn't like it, let *her* try to change the men. I can't.

CHAPTER 10

Executive Sex

AFTER they told me their stories in separate meetings, both Amy Dowery and Carol Lerner went back to their offices and compared notes. They recalled what they had told me and after considerable talk between themselves, they decided they had left too much unsaid.

So they asked whether they could come back together for another meeting to relate some of their experiences as women executives surrounded by platoons of male executives.

AMY: I have found, Lord knows, that the role of women in business is a very special one. We are living in a peculiar time. At the moment, the roles of men and women are so oddly confused that it's hard for any woman in business to know exactly what she is.

CAROL: The men are confused too. Some of them act like lions in the office but mice at home.

AMY: Yes, but I'm talking now just about us. The woman who goes into business today knows that she has a legal right to be there. She has been given the vote. She has been encouraged to go off and get an education, to develop as a human being, and to express herself as much as she can; to prove herself as best she can.

CAROL: Which is not something many men feel comfortable with.

AMY: But women in business don't really threaten the men. I think it's important for a woman to accept the reality that no matter what her position, she plays a sub-

sidiary role to a man. Not that she isn't equal but she just isn't the same. Her equality is kind of, well, in a shorter role. You know, men are usually tall and women are usually a couple of inches shorter, and men are older than women. Men are one up.

CAROL: It's part of the natural relationship of men and women, isn't it?

AMY: But the woman executive is a self-sufficient and independent sort of woman.

CAROL: She's the opposite of the gal who wants to stay home and be taken care of by the strong and dominant male.

AMY: Quite the opposite. The woman in business is striving for independence. She is seeking maturity, even if it often appears to be in a masculine way. Nevertheless, her relationship with her boss is based on the fact that he has some control over her. He may enjoy her willfulness and her self-sufficiency—

CAROL: I'm glad you said "may" enjoy. I haven't often seen it work out that way.

AMY: The man very often enjoys her challenge but always he has the upper hand. It is built into the relationship. Many men are delighted and in intellectual accord with the idea of women in business, but I think that emotionally they are not prepared for it.

CAROL: In their hearts you know they resent you.

AMY: Yes, very often.

CAROL: I don't find that men in business are more hostile to women than they are anywhere else. But that's not saying very much. I'm thinking of one man I work with. He really must hate women. His tone of voice on the telephone is such that when he asks you if you had a nice weekend, it's as though he's waiting to hear that you broke your leg.

AMY: I've noticed that the hostility shows in the tone of voice as often as in the words that come out of the mouth.

CAROL: It's a false, patronizing tone that makes you feel like shivering when you talk with him. His hostility shows through.

AMY: These men resent a woman who is able. The male ego in business needs to feel constantly reassured. For instance, I have to bend over backwards to show a man that I am not competing with him. That I am not interested in his job or in proving that I am as important as he is.

CAROL: I really just don't care. Your ego has to feel safe enough so that you don't constantly have to keep proving yourself.

AMY: And you have to be willing to stay in the background occasionally, although that isn't always easy to do.

CAROL: I have worked very, very hard to avoid being called a "female bitch" as the saying goes. What a delightful term for the female executive, the frustrated woman who pushes people around. Everything she does is so important to her.

AMY: Carol, you and I have often commented that a woman of this type treats those who work for her very badly, while she caters to those she works for. She very much acts like the boss.

CAROL: I've never really liked the term "boss" because it really doesn't apply to a woman. A woman can't boss anybody around. I don't care who it is—from the scrub-woman to the office boy. A gal doesn't boss people around.

AMY: She doesn't dare to.

CAROL: A woman treads very lightly. She says, "Could you please?" or "If you have a chance . . ." A man will be forgiven for business tensions. A woman can't have business tensions. If someone tells her that her plan has fallen through, she cannot reflect irritation or show that she's upset. These people will say, "She's becoming a real bitch."

AMY: "She's taking her job too seriously." That's another line they use.

CAROL: You're not supposed to get that wrapped up. Whereas if a man does this, they say he's had a rough day. It's like what happens in the home. The woman takes care of the man. He can rant and rave about his hard day at the office but she shouldn't in turn rant and rave about her hard day with the children.

AMY: A woman in business is supposed to be either one

of two things. Either a dumb little secretary who does not threaten the executive because she is not bright enough or aggressive enough or vicious enough—

CAROL: A lot of these gals don't mind working for a man, but when it comes to working for a woman, I think they feel a loss of status.

AMY: —or else, the kind of a woman who is so aggressive that she is almost a man.

CAROL: I try to preserve a certain amount of femininity and yet businesslike qualities at the same time.

AMY: I would say you've done it quite successfully.

CAROL: One of the most important techniques for a woman at the executive level is dress. And excluding what I have on today, which isn't particularly attractive, I try hard to be extremely well dressed. I dress a little bit on the Mainbocher side, not flashy or faddy.

AMY: Most women in business don't pay as much attention to clothes as you do.

CAROL: Well, that's true, Amy. One reason is that quite honestly, I love fashion. It's an avocation with me. I have a ball. I enjoy designing my own clothes. Sometimes I make them or I have them made and therefore I have a personal interest in them.

In New York, you have a lot of well-dressed girls as far as fashion and fad go. They do it inexpensively. But there's a difference between the dress of a woman of taste and that of a secretary with good taste but a low budget. When I started out I had only three or four decent dresses. I wore them over and over again but they were extremely high-quality clothes. It put me a cut above the other girls in appearance and dress. At the same time they were very distinctive clothes and would call attention to me, but only in a tasteful way.

AMY: Nothing flashy.

CAROL: It's hard to explain how a woman chooses clothes for business. They must be chosen to compliment you but not to draw attention in a sexual way. You want to be looked on as an attractive woman but you don't want to be looked on as a woman who is trying to be pushy.

AMY: Attractive without being sexy. I think that describes it.

CAROL: You can't be sexy. In business you have to go into a lot of meetings with a lot of people and if you distract, you are going to lose eventually. You'll irritate some people. You might fascinate others—

AMY: But it's no way to do business. When you're a woman executive you soon discover that the wrong dress can become as damaging to your career as the wrong business decision.

CAROL: I have lunch in the executive dining room of a large bank quite frequently with one particular man. I know him well enough to know that he is a real climber type. I want to make sure that they say to him afterwards, "Who was that attractive woman I saw you with at lunch?" This way he'll have me down for lunch more often and I'll get to know him better for business reasons. Whereas if I came in looking a little bit dowdy or sexy or overdressed, it wouldn't go.

AMY: He wants to be proud of your company. He doesn't want an aggressive woman who threatens him. Although I've noticed that the aggressive type of woman will occasionally perform some kind of a maternal gesture to reassure the man that everything is okay. I think he unconsciously recognizes her as a mother. I think women executives are normally expected to play the role of Mommy.

CAROL: The typical wife of the typical executive is often the same basic type.

AMY: But she is probably bossier, don't you think?

CAROL: The executive doesn't have the upper hand with his wife. His wife can nag.

AMY: His wife can push him around if she thinks it's necessary. And does. His woman employee or his office playmate cannot.

CAROL: I watch very closely the way I work with these men. When I'm trying to get something done and have to ask someone to do something over or make suggestions for changes, I feel like I'm walking on a bed of eggs. I just

don't say, "This needs changing. Do this"—which a lot of men are privileged to do and do. I find that a woman must be much more careful in giving out orders of this kind.

AMY: You can't do what the wife would do.

CAROL: God forbid!

AMY: These husbands are two-sided people. In business they are sharp, aggressive, and pushy. But at home I have the feeling that they fall apart at the seams. You see they are sufficiently intimidated so that they can't work out their problems at home.

CAROL: Or they don't try.

AMY: Often they don't. It's easier to cheat on the side which is a kind of sneaky little thing to do. It's a small way to behave. They look for a Mommy-type or for a woman who will justify their double standard. A man who is not content with his relationship at home, and who would like to embellish it on the side, plays his role according to the feedback he gets from a woman.

CAROL: That's the key point.

AMY: A very dynamic, aggressive man in business today undoubtedly can make out with women that he meets through his work, with women executives, with secretaries, with researchers, any way that he wants to.

CAROL: If the women let him.

AMY: Well, they do. You know it's easy for an executive to have an affair without detection. Executives have meetings in town and all kinds of excuses for staying away from home. Everybody knows the answers. The executives know the answers. Even the switchboard operator knows the answers.

A married man can stay in town because he has a business meeting with a client. Or a dinner date and a meeting afterwards. He can easily justify getting home at 11 o'clock or midnight.

CAROL: He can also use the out-of-town routine. Tell his wife he's going to Cleveland on an overnight business trip. And have the night to himself, overnight, right here in town.

AMY: Certainly it's no problem to find an excuse. In sophisticated businesses everybody becomes more sophisticated, even the most naive people. There was a time when switchboard operators were rather naive types who just did their jobs and were friendly over the telephone. Now the switchboard operator knows who is calling whom the most often and why. Very often she is the one who has to take the messages and supply the answers.

CAROL: It's part of her job. They justify it by the fact that this is what a boss has told them to do.

AMY: It happens this way. The switchboard operator may see an executive going out with a woman executive. Knows very well that there is hanky-panky involved. However, the boss has told her that he is having dinner with a client tonight. If his wife should call, he will probably not get home until 11 o'clock. Then, if he is a wise executive, he will phone his wife, very lovey-dovey, about five o'clock and apologize for not coming home on time. He will call her himself. He'll keep his bases guarded.

CAROL: There are many women executives who use their femininity to get ahead. I remember a gal who confided in me that she was in trouble, and I asked her, "What's the matter? Did he try to take you to bed?" She said, "Oh yes, but that isn't what I mean. He's complaining about a report that I wrote." Some girls don't handle these incidents. They encourage them.

AMY: Your feelings show. Men can tell if a gal is the least bit receptive.

CAROL: Men know this.

AMY: I know. I used to do it myself. My first job was as a receptionist in an advertising agency. I was 19 years old and I was a virgin and I didn't know a thing. The following were making passes at me: the office manager, the boys in the mail room, the account executives, an art director, and once in a while, a client. Sometimes even a visitor to the office. There are six categories I have just rattled off who were making passes at me. Fortunately I was such a dumb kid that after two passes, these people decided it wasn't worth it. I was miraculously saved in

each instance. There was always a hero somewhere who would recognize that it bothered me but I really didn't know what was going on.

CAROL: No boss, as long as I have worked, has ever made any kind of pass at me. The reason they've never tried is that I've never wanted them to. If I really had wanted them to, they might have. I was going to say that none of them ever appealed to me but that's not true. I just never had a job that I was willing to throw away.

AMY: Despite what you say, Carol, I think there is hardly a woman executive who hasn't, at one time or another, become involved with a man whom she knows in business, whether or not he is her boss. Years ago, it happened to me.

I can remember applying for a job and being interviewed by the company owner, who was an attractive man. I was in my late 20's and it was more a flirtation than an interview. Although I was frightened I took the job because I felt an attraction for the boss.

CAROL: I'm sure he sensed it that you were attracted to him.

AMY: I felt it and I liked it. At the same time I really worried about coping with it. But very soon I stopped coping and actually got involved. At first we had a good working relationship. The arrangement offered me many advantages because obviously my salary would be reviewed more favorably than someone else's. Obviously my work situation became easier and more comfortable as long as everything was going well.

But sooner or later things start going badly. There is hardly a situation where a married man, as most of these executives are, does not ultimately become bored. Or he finds the outside relationship becoming a noose around his neck, too demanding and much too difficult for him to cope with. Finally he gets to the point where he wants to let go. He really wants to get rid of it.

CAROL: And rid of you too.

AMY: Some of the early symptoms were his annoyance with my working habits. Things that were perfectly ac-

ceptable in other people were suddenly no longer acceptable in me. Like my habit of taking a long lunch hour. He now criticized me for that. He criticized me for talking too long on the telephone, even on business calls. A minor delinquency, like a report I submitted a couple of days late, even though it was tolerated freely among all the other employees in the company, men and women, suddenly became a point of dissension between us.

CAROL: Was it known in the office that you were having an affair?

AMY: Suspected. I think when you are working with people who are reasonably astute it's awfully hard to keep this from them. They may not pry. They may not ask. They may never know for sure but as they begin to compare notes among themselves, enough of them have seen symptoms to enable them to compile a picture. That's what finally happened in this situation. When it became unbearable for me, I rather stupidly became adamant about my rights and tried to fight on the grounds of just an employee.

CAROL: It was too late for that.

AMY: Of course it was. I already had too many privileges. I could no longer be considered just an employee. And all the compensatory factors were beginning to show. Where you had a privilege, you now had to toe the line. Where you had a leniency, you were now overdisciplined.

Oh dear, I don't know. It's so hard once you have lost yourself to this point. When you have already disrupted the character of a business relationship, it's too late. It really is too late.

CAROL: That's why I've never gotten involved. Not that I sometimes didn't want to. But I couldn't afford to throw away a job.

AMY: In this situation I had to go. Not everybody has the strength to do it. I should have done it before I got fired. I should have quit at the first sign of his malcontent. But it is very difficult after you have already tasted wine to come back to earth. It was a disaster, ■ complete disaster.

I can suggest only one thing in a situation like this. If you have to go through it once to find out it is all wrong, go through it as quickly as possible and then get out. Quit the job. Just break off the whole thing.

CAROL: You learned the hard way, but isn't that the way we learn most lessons in life? I don't know what has happened to women. In their attempt to prove they are equal to men, some women have completely tossed out all values about self-respect and dignity.

AMY: I certainly don't think, Carol, that sexual activity is dirty. I don't think there is anything wrong with an attractive flirtation between men and women. It does nice things to enhance everyone's ego provided you stop there.

CAROL: I think it's better to stop before that. Before it begins. A woman can avoid getting into these situations by her tone, by her manner, if she wants to. You just don't encourage certain types of conversation. You don't talk much about your personal life and problems. If a man starts to dig into your personal life, obviously as a preliminary, you put him off with a very brief answer and then you change the subject.

AMY: And you don't have to accept any off-color jokes beyond a certain point. They're always feeling around for an opportunity to tell a dirty joke. A certain amount of this may be unavoidable in business but there is a point where taste comes into it. This is where you let them know.

CAROL: Men pick this up very fast. But you must not offend them. It's a sticky wicket, and you have to be very careful.

AMY: I can remember, for example, countless lunches where I know that the man, whether or not he is married, is sounding me out on my approach to sex. I remember one such married man who is really attractive and quite charming. I wanted to keep him as a business contact and also to cultivate him as a friend if it were possible.

He worked his way up to the subject—I knew what was coming—and he said, "It must be very difficult for an at-

tractive woman to share an apartment with a roommate. What do you do about your personal relationships?" I said we had no problem and he said, "Well, she certainly isn't there all the time?" I told him no; "As a matter of fact, she has just gone back home for the holidays." He jumped at the chance. "No kidding. That's terrific. Well, what are you doing for dinner tonight?"

I find that humor is truly the best way to handle these things because I really think it is fairly natural for a man to try to make passes at a woman. I don't condone it and I don't think it promotes ethical consequences in some situations. But I think it is natural. These things can be treated without hostility.

CAROL: I've never found that easy to do. I get angry when someone tries it.

AMY: No sense in getting angry if you're confident enough of yourself to realize that sex is part of everybody's life. But you can't do anything that will put men on the defensive.

CAROL: Of course I try to avoid hurting a man when I put him off. But the older I get, the more inflexible I seem to be getting on this point. I have a tendency to be very frank if people get too obvious. Even if it were my boss, I'm afraid it would be very hard on both of us. I'd be liable to put my foot down and say, "Come off it. If that's what you want, I'm not interested. Find someone else."

AMY: That's sudden death.

CAROL: I suppose so, Amy. But the only thing that's saved me is that I haven't had to say it. I nipped it in the bud. They never got to this point.

AMY: You can't put a man on the defensive and hold your job. This is terribly important, especially if it's someone that you need in business. Too many women are afraid when the guy makes a pass.

Their reaction is, "Heavens! What did I do to invite it? What kind of a girl does he think I am?" instead of simply realizing that men do this. Or they'll say to him, "Shame on you!" which is the worst thing in the world to do to a

man. It's not specifically "Shame on you!" but in essence, that's what they are saying.

It's a wrist-slapping. It makes a man feel guilty and ashamed. It makes him feel embarrassed and how does he recover in a situation like this? I think it's the worst possible approach that a woman can take.

CAROL: I agree with you in theory, Amy, but I come back to my point. Things should never be allowed to develop to the stage where he makes the advance.

AMY: All right, Carol, but suppose he already has, for one reason or another. If she is mature enough—and goodness knows if she is in business, she ought to be—she ought to indicate that she is flattered by the compliment of his suggestion but that she just isn't interested for one reason or another.

CAROL: The old standby—invent a steady boy friend who would be terribly annoyed.

AMY: Or indicate you think it's slightly naughty of him to suggest it. That's taking it in your stride. No point in becoming horrified. Why should a gal be so nervous just because a man has suggested something? She doesn't have to take him up on it.

CAROL: On this point, we agree 100 percent.

CHAPTER 11

Counterintelligence

GENE BELL is an oil industry executive whose job is in danger because he bet on the wrong horse. His terrible sin consisted of loyally serving his new boss, vice-president Bruce Sondern.

For that, his boss's boss, senior vice-president Walter Heath, hasn't forgiven him. Walter Heath is a Texas-sized man, and his passions and hostilities match his bulldozer-like compulsions. If you happen to get in his way, he'll knock you over. Gene Bell happened to get in his way, and as this book goes to press Gene Bell's job is most uncertain.

First, Heath tried to knock over Sondern out of jealousy and resentment. But he was foiled and now he's going after Gene Bell.

I don't think he'll succeed in getting rid of Bell, because his own disturbed personal behavior is already beginning to rock the company's foundations. Since the company is publicly owned, with a board consisting of outside directors, my guess is that Walter Heath is more likely to be forced out than Gene Bell. And if the president doesn't ax Heath voluntarily, it's my surmise that the board of directors will ask him to do so.

Walter Heath is one of the two pillars of strength who built the company. The other is the president himself. In private conversations, Bell described Heath as a "wild man," and certainly the detailed description of his "nut-tiness" (Bell's word for it) confirms the picture. But that

"nuttiness" didn't get out of hand until fairly recently. Until then, the president simply accepted it as a fact of life and laughed privately just as long as Heath ran the company profitably.

For 30 years Heath and the president have worked solidly together, ever since they drilled a wildcat well in west-central Texas and it turned into a gusher. They had implicit trust and confidence in each other and the president let Heath run the show. But now cracks have appeared in their relationship. When you read Bell's story, you can make your own prediction as to whether senior vice-president Heath or production boss Bell is most likely to be handed his walking papers:

I am in charge of our production, keeping the wells pumping. Above me is Bruce Sondern, the vice-president. Above him is Walter Heath, the senior vice-president. He reports directly to the president.

Because Heath grew up with the company from the time we were very small, he was in the habit of doing everything himself, especially making the decisions. Whatever he wanted to do was it. He's a very strong guy, not at all weak. He did not delegate authority. Perfectly willing to take the major responsibility. Very able.

Today, the president and Heath don't see eye to eye by a longshot. The president must have a whipping boy, and Heath is it simply because if someone must be blamed for everything, obviously the top executive is the easiest one to blame.

In the early days, the president cowed him to death. He made him his slave. Heath was almost his first employee, so he knew how to deal with him. Heath had to be available to the president 24 hours a day and always had to leave word where he could be reached. Heath told me that just a couple of years ago, when he went to the Midland Rodeo in June, he was paged over the loudspeaker to talk to the president on the telephone. The president never left him alone.

But in recent years the president has been quite in-

active, and Heath has been running the company pretty much all alone. I don't think the president has even showed up in his office more than 20 or 30 days a year.

Walter Heath is brilliant in some areas; an absolute nut in others. His strong point is an ability to take risks. You have to have courage to gamble half a million dollars on digging a well. You might drill 10 or 15 thousand feet down and find nothing. In fact, you can have the best geologists in the country and there's still one chance in three that you'll get a dry well. It takes a certain nerve to take risks like that, and Heath has nerve.

He was a poor little boy when he started with the president years ago. Now making \$85,000 a year. He is nevertheless financially harassed. He invested about \$150,000 in speculations in the stock market, and in the '62 break he lost about half of that money, which he didn't have and subsequently had to borrow. So he has financial problems.

He remarried five or six years ago. Created more financial problems. Nevertheless, he still lives rather luxuriously. I feel he is probably living over his income in the light of his stock losses. Large house, complete with the big white columns. Swimming pool, two Cadillacs, private plane, two girls in college, mink coats for his wife. Mink coats, that's plural.

Heath personally does not dress particularly well. For instance, his taste in neckties is poor. He wears eastern-style ties, but they never match his suits, although they are not particularly loud. He has put on weight and not adjusted his suits. They don't befit his position. He wears a western-style silver buckle belt, not exactly right for an executive, even down here.

He gets extremely excited. He has a persecution complex which I think is his main problem. Because while he is very astute and rational in every other area, in one respect he is absolutely nuts. That's the only word for it.

Once—it must have been at least 16 or 18 years ago, right after the war—he tried to work out some sort of a joint exploration deal with British interests in the Middle East. I don't know the details. But when the deal fell through, he became convinced the British had it in for

him. For once, he had an enemy, ■ great enemy on whom he could train all of his big guns. It has been a battle that has gone on for years and years.

Whenever Heath had a business reverse, he was convinced that it was due to a British agent at work. There were British agents throughout the world who were his enemies. If a banker decided not to go along with him on a deal, he'd never look into any of the reasons that bothered the banker; the man was ■ British agent. He could close off everything with "British agent!"

Whenever you walked into a room with him, he told you not to say anything. He'd order you to keep quiet; he would place his finger to his lips to shush you. Then he would get himself up on a desk. He'd say, "I want to show you that this room is bugged."

And he would take something out of a light fixture that was supposedly a piece of electronic equipment. It could be anything, a chewing gum wrapper, a broken pencil stub. You never knew what it was. He'd say, "This is a piece of electronic equipment." Thereupon he would start an investigation throughout the company to find all the British agents.

The company revolved around his phobia with the British. Once I was called to a meeting to take up a very touchy question with Mr. Heath. I walked into his office that morning and the place was filled with all the executives.

Mr. Heath announced that he had obtained information through his secret sources, his secret pipelines, that finally the greatest of all indignities had been heaped upon him—he said also, the greatest of all honors. "The British have put a price on my head."

And he went around the room asking every executive in the place what he should do. Everybody looked at each other to figure out what they could possibly say. Finally one of them spoke up. "Gee, Mr. Heath, that's terrible. I'd call the FBI." And he answered, "Harry, that's very stupid. The FBI and the British Secret Service work together. What do you expect from them?"

He said, "I need ideas. I need methods of combating

this." They said, "Mr. Heath, what about the CIA?" He said, "No, no. I'll combat it myself." And he got all sorts of guarded, well-protected answers from people. It was an immensely solemn occasion. Finally, he got around to the chief geophysicist. He said, "You're the big brain around here. You always have a quick answer. What should I do now that the British have put a price on my head?" And the man replied, "Mr. Heath, I think you ought to take it."

The whole room went into an absolute state of horror for about a split second until Mr. Heath burst out laughing. Then they all laughed and it became a very funny thing. Of course, there never was a price on his head.

Sometime after this he made a substantial investment in a British drilling company, chiefly because there was to be a party at the British Embassy in Washington for a group of American investors. He wanted to walk into the British Embassy, complete with his Stetson, to see if he would be killed. I went to the party with him. He was greeted by the ambassador and his staff, and they said they were grateful for this fine American oilman and his confidence in Britain's future.

But there never was end of it. He accused everyone he let go of having been in the pay of the British. I remember in particular one executive whom he fired. He discovered that the man had served in the Royal Canadian Air Force during the war. That was "proof" of his tie to British Intelligence.

He was absolutely nuts on this point, but I got along beautifully with him. I was his little boy to whom he was teaching things. Actually he taught me a great many things, especially how to use a wiretap detector. He positively knew that his phones were being tapped by you know who. He said to me, "There has to be someone around who can detect a tapped telephone."

So I got hold of a friend of mine in Dallas who was a private eye. He had equipment to tap people's telephones and detecting equipment to know if your phone was being tapped. I introduced him to Heath and he became Heath's

very close buddy. I didn't have to tell him Heath was off his rocker, but it was a very profitable relationship.

It cost \$500 for the instrument installation plus long-term rental. And then Heath wanted a lot of them. The next thing, sure enough, he wanted to bug other people's phones—in the office, outside the office, even mine. The private eye told me Heath gave him an order to bug my phone. So I said, "Fine, bug it," and he told me exactly when he was going to hook up the bug and for how long. Heath would be secretly listening to me on the phone and during that time I would be sure to call friends and tell them what a wonderful, wonderful guy Walter Heath was.

The president has, at one time or another recently, pulled Heath apart in front of every executive in the place. Even at the club, so other executives could spread it around. The president's story is that *he* built the company. After it went public, he thought he would be able to take it easy. He did, and the company went to hell under Heath's direction. How do you think these stories affected Heath?

So the president brought in this vice-president, Bruce Sondern. It was really a slap in the face to Heath. The president told us that Sondern was brought in because we needed more decision-making personnel. He said it was wrong for Heath to make most of the decisions, especially since Heath had been responsible for our bad luck in drilling offshore. We made four tries, and we got four holes with plenty of mud and nothing more. He blamed it on Heath's decisions.

Sondern is quite different. Personality-wise, he is a very able, experienced, cultured, mature guy. Age 51. Been in the business for 25 years. Sondern was brought in from one of the giants where things are done much more according to the book, where authority is definitely assigned and delegated. Therefore, I consider him much more of an organization man than Heath.

Friction quickly showed between them because one was an organization man and one was definitely not. It created a conflict. The senior vice-president would do

things that actually were the responsibility of the vice-president. Heath would act this way not necessarily to show his authority. I would rather give him the benefit of the doubt and say he was in the habit of doing it this way for so long that he couldn't change his method of operating.

Well, Sondern was a very patient guy for a long period of time, a year or more. During that period he often used to sit in his office and wait for the phone to ring. When Heath did call, Sondern gave in to whatever he wanted. At first he lived in fear and terror. Heath blustered and ordered him around. He listened quietly, didn't argue, but one day he finally decided not to do what Heath wanted done. So Heath went to the president and told him the new man wouldn't listen to advice, meaning *his* advice.

Then Heath wrote Sondern an abusive memo, full of nasty names and filth. Sondern later showed it to me. He figured it meant the end of his job. So he went to the president and asked him what he should do.

"Don't worry," the president told him. Sondern asked, "Does it mean I'll be fired?"

"It means Heath'd fire you right now if he could, but I won't let him," the president said. "So just ignore it and don't worry. Just bide your time."

Very gradually, Heath was made to understand that it would be better for the company if he made fewer decisions and left more responsibility to the vice-president. At this moment Heath and Sondern are at each other's throats. Their viewpoints are so different, their personalities are so different, and their work experience has been so different that there is severe friction.

As you can see, I got along all right with Heath. This was fortunate for me because this was a period when the president was away most of the time and Heath was running the business.

But then I made my blunder. When Sondern came in as vice-president, I felt it my duty as production chief in the company to lead him, to give him a background of

what made the world go around. This is the way I operate. I wouldn't know how else to do it. But this alienated me from Heath because two cliques grew up.

One clique was composed of the senior vice-president plus the other two executives who had wanted Sondern's job and resented the fact that an outsider had been brought in to fill it. They gave Heath lip service and became his buddy boys. The other group was made up of Sondern himself and the people who worked for Sondern, who had come to recognize his ability and to respect him. These people found themselves in the opposite camp, and I was one of them.

Obviously this was very bad for the company, because everything that one camp did was criticized by the other. It was like one guy trying to pull a wagon and the other guy pushing it in the opposite direction. Jealousies, arguments, backbitings. The battle of San Jacinto all over again.

So now I was in one group and out of the other. My trouble area is now with Heath. Where we used to have considerable rapport, I find that there is none now. He shows his distance from me simply by coldness in conversation. When I returned from vacation, he just said, "Hello, nice to have you back." Not a word more.

He used to use me as a sounding board. He used to talk with me about his problems with the president of the company. But it's been a long time since he has said anything to me about that. Now he confides in one of the people who wanted Sondern's job.

Obviously he's angry with me because I'm in the enemy camp. I never planned it that way. I never wanted it that way. It all happened because I have been the greatest help to Sondern in making his life smooth and tolerable. I think that must have a great deal to do with it. Because it doesn't take a genius to figure out that had I not been so cooperative, Sondern would have had a really tough time. In fact, I think Heath probably could have gotten rid of him early in the game.

Heath wants to hold the whole company in the palm

of his hand. He resents other people having authority. So now he's after me, and he's told me I leave something to be desired from an ability point of view.

Possibly I do. I'm not as aggressive as many other people. I'm more interested in production than in company politics. I can't go out and cut somebody else's throat. I'm so much of an organization man that I want above all to get things done. I've been trying to help the people who work under me, to mold the department.

I think I am doing the right thing. I think that our production department is operating better than it did two years ago. I think our production record will stand up under scrutiny.

But if Heath really decides to go after me, how am I going to prove that I'm not a British secret agent?

CHAPTER 12

All in a Day's Work

SOMETIMES the difference between heaven and hell for the executive is the difference between the old boss and the new one. Personal relationships can change overnight, and the mutual respect and trust of two associates is replaced by buck-passing, double-talk, and phoniness.

That was the experience of the executive in a diversified business equipment manufacturing company who told me the story that follows.

Fortunately and untypically, he survived both the superiors merely by doing his work. He didn't actively play office politics; the game didn't interest him. His personal relationships were passive; he didn't care who took the credit for his work. He wasn't emotionally disturbed by his sadistic and incompetent boss, and he wasn't, even secretly, seeking his superior's job.

The excellence of his own work was all that interested him because that was all he could control. As long as he was left free to do his best, he simply didn't care what happened after his work left his hands. He just did what came naturally, and what came naturally was a high quality of work. The good boss welcomed it, encouraged it, and used it. The incompetent boss appropriated his ideas and presented them as his own.

Both got from him what they wanted. The result is that he is still with the company today, doing his job as before. He's a living testimonial to the fact that sometimes you can survive simply by doing good work:

I came to the company in 1960 as manager of the advertising department of the office copying machines division.

The very day that I got my job, the president brought in Arnold Meltzer as general sales manager. He was about 56 or 58 years old. He came in after a very successful performance in a smaller company. He made a big speech about what he was going to do in this company, and he tried. He tried very hard. Arnold Meltzer was a man who would get real mad; burn 10,000 volts. He was a good marketing man and a good advertising executive, although his title was general sales manager. I reported to him.

Except for being bald, he looked like ■ big overgrown boy; the sloppiest and the weirdest character you had ever met. Today he would have been called ■ retarded beatnik. He was 5'2", fat, flabby. He must have weighed 200 pounds or more. Not married. He had the weirdest laugh you ever heard; a terrific sense of humor.

To look at him and to listen to him, you would say this guy was just a bum. But when you got to know him better, you developed an admiration for him and you would follow him anywhere. It wasn't until much later that I discovered he was a graduate of Harvard, *summa cum laude*, major in philosophy.

He was wealthy. But his shoes always needed new heels, or a shine, or both. His socks always flopped over his ankles; he had a lot of nervous mannerisms; he kept scratching at his face, and I don't know what else. But sharp as a whip.

Despite his pleasant disposition, he was dynamic and he scared the hell out of everybody in the organization. They were terrified of him because he wanted things done. He saw the bad features of the organization, and he wanted to correct them. He made decisions when decisions were necessary.

I soon learned that there were certain things you could do with Arnold that you couldn't do with anyone else. You gave him a good idea and he would say, "Go ahead and do it." You gave him ■ good piece of copy and he'd

say, "Fine." If the copy had to be changed, he knew what was wrong and he knew how to tell you to change it.

He was all work and no play. But he knew his stuff. He knew his marketing. He was the brains behind the early success of our copying machine. And don't forget that we were up against Xerox.

He was the one who went on the road to visit the dealers, and after a while they came to respect him for what he was, despite his sloppy appearance. He had a great deal of personal integrity. He was very considerate of people. He would take up the fight for dealers when they had problems at the factory. The president looked upon dealers as worms and had contempt for anybody who didn't have more money than he did.

The others in the company treated me like just another piece of furniture; this was the way they handled people there. They weren't offensive in any way, but they accepted me as only another hired hand. I think that my relationship with Arnold began to improve when he discovered that, unlike the others, I enjoyed the work; I appreciated the product. So he began to listen to what I had to say.

Here was a man who learned your strengths and your weaknesses and was able to encourage you by sheer personality. You had no need to use any subterfuge with him. I don't think there was an individual in the organization who wasn't willing to go for broke with Arnold. He was respected by the dealers and respected by the salesmen.

You could safely admit to him you had made an error. I'd give him a piece of copy that didn't make sense and he'd read it off to me and I'd laugh because he'd be right. I'd change it and that was it. But if you came to him and tried to bluff, you couldn't get anywhere. I don't think I made many serious mistakes with him. His assistant once told me that I was the only person in the organization who received any compliments from him. The reason was the quality of my work. Just for that reason. He brought out the best in me because I wanted to please

him. I don't know whether I liked the product or I liked Arnold. But I did a hell of a job because I enjoyed the work. Even when there was tension, I was able to get the job done and done properly.

With Arnold Meltzer, you worked with complete freedom, with no inhibitions. You knew if you did a thing that was good, you would hear about it. If you did something that wasn't good enough, you would get constructive criticism. He never gave destructive criticism.

Well, one day Arnold was taken seriously ill and we were told he'd be out for quite a while. So the president brought in Bart Aloisi as acting general sales manager. Arnold was out for about three months and then, unexpectedly, he died in January. At that point Bart Aloisi took over permanently.

Bart Aloisi was an entirely different individual. First of all, he was just a horsy salesman, not a sales manager. He wasn't a manager of people. He was a loudmouthed guy who had been kicked out of several companies.

Whereas Arnold had been able to sit down and lock the door and work at his desk for hours at a time on a realistic and detailed sales plan, Bart would get up on his feet and talk and talk and contradict himself. The office joke was a definition of his management policy, namely, the idea he just got until he has lunch with someone else tomorrow.

He operated by making promises and then reneging on them. When he came into the company the first thing he did was to send a letter to the entire business equipment trade, saying that from now on his policy would be to hold the line on prices. They weren't going to cut prices at all. And no direct factory selling to discount houses.

Those who knew Bart Aloisi said, "What a phony baloney!" But most of the dealers didn't know him personally and they accepted it. They bought the machines and within a very short time, he made special deals at a very low price with a couple of the big dealers. The rest of the dealers were left high and dry with the stuff on their shelves.

When he made promises to you about promotions,

raises, or anything else, he would couch them in vague language. He wouldn't put them in writing so that later when you would remind him of a promise, he would say he hadn't made such a promise. You would repeat what he had said and he would say, "Oh no, that's not what I said." He would then tell you something else that sounded almost like what he had said. He pulled this trick very often.

I discovered also that when he got upset his voice would fly into a rage. One day I was in another office, all alone at the time, when he began to scream. I said, "What are you yelling at? Who the hell do you think you are?" He calmed down so quickly that I had to laugh.

He saw he couldn't frighten me. From then on I had no problem with him. Except once. That was the time I went to him with a personal problem. My mother had had a stroke. Doctor bills were costing tremendous amounts of money; more than I had. He wanted to know why I was so disturbed, and I told him. He said, "If it's a matter of a couple of thousand dollars, let me lend it to you personally." I said I didn't want him to. I was at the banks and overextended already.

His mask of kindness dropped for a second, and he began to treat me very dreadfully. Bart told me that a man in debt couldn't work as well as others. Then he began to examine my expenses to find out if I was stealing from the company. Actually he resented the fact that I wouldn't take money from him personally. He wanted me dependent on him. We had strained feelings between us for a while after this incident.

He was always inviting people to come to him with their problems and when they did, it was the worst thing they ever could have done. Because he would use his own method of analysis. He had to read your handwriting for a week. Every hour on the hour you had to come in and write something down. He would measure that handwriting against your handwriting of last time.

He used it as a form of torture. He would constantly try to frighten you about your job. So nobody ever came

to him with a personal problem more than once. He would say, "The only reason I want to go into any great depth with you is because you are a good friend of mine. But I am just wondering if I should have in my department anyone with such obvious homosexual tendencies as you seem to have."

Actually, there were a couple of people in the office who had obvious homosexual tendencies. But he never detected them. He knew nothing about analysis; he just knew all the clichés.

Before any salesman or office employee could be employed, Aloisi had to examine his handwriting. In one case when I hired a young fellow as an assistant, Aloisi called me in a few days later and said, "Do you know that you have hired an alcoholic? I can tell right from his handwriting."

I said, "Mr. Aloisi, you don't even have to go that far. It states in his application, where it asks what organizations you belong to, he wrote, 'Alcoholics Anonymous'." He replied, "I was trying to trap you whether or not you read it. How could you knowingly hire an alcoholic?"

I said, "This man is not an alcoholic. He belongs to Alcoholics Anonymous, and he has been a member for 16 years. I hired what I believe to be a very competent assistant."

Aloisi set out to prove that he was right. He went to work on this guy for three months. He put him on his personal staff and gave him the most degrading sorts of jobs. You know, running errands for him, humiliating him constantly, telling him how inadequate he was. This went on for months and finally one day in desperation the man started to drink again. That was all that was needed. He didn't check in again for five days and when he checked back in, I was ordered to fire him on the spot. Aloisi did it because he liked to destroy people.

Naturally I didn't trust the man. When the mask was on, he could charm the birds out of the trees. That's the time he was most dangerous because he was trying to get something out of you and you knew it. He would invite

you to lunch and talk to you about your work. He would find something nice to say about you. He would ask your advice about the business.

What he wanted was to pick your brains for ideas which he would then present to management. He was a very poor executive in that no matter what proposal you brought to him, he would say, "Fine!" The theory was that if it worked out to his benefit he would take the credit. If it didn't work out he would blame it on you. The egg would be on your face; his face would be clean. He was always trying to outsmart the other guy.

His favorite trick was to remember things you said and then use them later against you. He was known to distort the truth. He wouldn't use the technique as an excuse to fire people. He used it to needle them. He was the type of individual who needed a fall guy in the background to take the blame if anything went wrong.

To get along with him, I gave him what he wanted, which was work. I had to think twice about what I would say because he would want information to compromise other people, like something somebody else did wrong. I wouldn't give it.

His right hand in sales was a gal named Gretchen Wagner. Gretchen was a shrew. She was a monster. She was really in love with him. But he just ran away every time she tried to get near him in a personal way. He recognized her ability as an administrator, but as a woman he couldn't stand her. She took it upon herself to be his protectress.

Gretchen knew so much of Aloisi's habits that she knew when you could go near him and when to stay away. She was a politician and she carried tales to him. She squealed on everybody. I don't think he encouraged her; she just encouraged herself. She was in a powerful position there. Matter of fact, I despised her, and I wouldn't permit her to exercise authority over me.

If I gave her information she would go directly to Aloisi. On one occasion I had been to her office and she asked me a couple of questions. I made a remark which

was almost on the verge of compromising somebody else. It was really a minor thing but I should not have said it. She immediately picked up the phone and repeated it to Aloisi. I then realized that I could not tell this woman anything, even in confidence, because she didn't know how to handle information of this sort.

At this point, although Aloisi and I had a fairly good relationship, I also recognized that there was a built-in hazard, because I knew he would reach a point where his sales methods, poor sales, his attitude toward distributors and dealers, and the competitive situation in the business equipment industry would all converge into a crisis. Then he would try to save his neck by sacrificing somebody else. I saw this coming from the day he got the job. And it came. It came within a year, and he couldn't duck.

They ran into sales problems. It got to the point where photocopy machine sales were actually supporting the company instead of paper sales. When things became pretty rough in paper sales the president soon discovered that Aloisi didn't have command of the place, didn't have the respect of the dealers, and was incapable of actually running his own sales organization. So he let him keep the title of general sales manager, but actually reduced him to the job of general manager of a smaller department.

A power struggle then developed between the newly hired sales manager of the photocopy machine division and Aloisi as manager of the other department, because the guy who was selling machines wanted to use some of the profits from sales of other products for additional promotion. Aloisi fought like hell but got nowhere.

He slipped fast. In fact, it soon began to be suggested around the office that he was taking money. Now maybe so; maybe not. I didn't know; he could have had his hand in the till. I did know that the president was looking for a way to fire Aloisi.

But Aloisi had an ironclad contract that could not be broken. He was a shrewd guy and because they couldn't fire him and they didn't want to buy him out, this thing looked like it would simply drag on for three years.

Then one day the president called me to his office and said, "I want to teach you a business lesson." He called in Aloisi and said, "Bart, you've been stealing."

There was a long, pained silence. He asked, "Is it true or not?"

Aloisi said, "Yes, it's true."

"How much?"

"I don't know."

He said, "Bart, you're fired. Get out!"

Bart replied, "I've been with you for two years. Can I have two minutes?"

He said, "All right, go ahead." I was sitting there in the corner and I don't think Aloisi even noticed my presence. I was embarrassed as all hell. I tried to get up and I was motioned back to my seat.

Bart thought for a minute and said, "Look, I've been with you for two years, and I've done a good job, haven't I?"

The president said, "Yes, you have."

Bart Aloisi went on. "The two kids are in college," he said, "and I have all the life insurance I'll ever need. Just before I came with you I had a major coronary. The house in Short Hills is paid for. I've got a Jaguar and I've got a station wagon. So I've got all the money in the bank that I'll need and I'm due to retire in three years. Suppose you fire me and start with someone else, how will you ever know?"

"If I tell you that I have stopped, you can believe I've stopped and you can check it that I've stopped. If you get a new man in, he might have some ways that you've never thought of and I've never thought of."

There was about a minute of silence. Finally the president behind his desk looked up and smiled. "Get back to your office, Bart." And that was it.

Afterwards, I asked the president, "Was that the lesson you intended to teach me?" He said, "No, I didn't know what would happen. But I'm glad you were here. There's no way to answer that argument because he's perfectly right."

"I know every executive in this business who deals in

business equipment. I know some money has got to stick along the way: the choice of the railroad line, the choice of the trucking line, the choice of suppliers, the raw material. I know he's absolutely right. But if I started out with somebody else, I'd never know."

That was it. It was never talked about on any other level of the company. I know that for a fact. And three years later Bart stepped aside and retired gracefully.

We even gave an office party in his honor.

CHAPTER 13

Out with the Old

THE thought of old age frightens many people, but especially it terrifies the executive. What is old age?

In business, it is over 40. It is a time when social security and pension benefits are still a quarter of a century in the future and when death (for the U.S. white male) is statistically 31 years off.

You could chart the income of the average executive and it would show a line gradually ascending, tapering to a brief plateau, and then beginning to descend. The plateau would hover around the age 40 mark. The decline in income results not from enforced pay cuts, but from dismissals and shifts to lesser paying positions.

The executive past 40 soon discovers that his years of service with the company have not bought him security. Younger men are rising behind him, pressing hard for advancement. New technologies are lessening the value of his past experience. And he himself all too often lacks the fire and drive which propelled him forward in earlier years.

Management, confronted with the older executive, finds its own set of problems. It wants the benefit of his experience if that experience still has value, but it cannot slow the forward movement of the corporation. It wants to reward his years of loyal service but not at the expense of reduced performance. Its dilemma is real.

But the primary burden for solving the problem must fall on the individual executive himself. If ever a sense of

reality were indispensable for his career, it is now, at this point in his life.

What does he want for the future? Does he seek continued advances up the ladder? Or would he prefer to settle comfortably in his present position and let others do the climbing? Whichever he decides requires a different action. Simple reactions to the transient events of the day will not suffice.

The two older executives whose stories follow were elbowed aside and out by younger men. Although their situations and the specifics of their ordeals differed, they had in common their failure to defend themselves.

The first threw up his hands in despair and abandoned hope until his dismissal was inevitable. The second stood by for years, doing nothing on his own behalf, while his younger rival courted the favor of the board of directors.

As you read their stories, notice their consistent failure to take positive actions in self-defense. Note how they never estimated what the boss really wanted from them or what qualities he welcomed in their younger rivals. If these are tragic stories, perhaps the real tragedy lies in the failure of two good men to do something about their situations instead of resigning themselves to what became the inevitable:

I was in my late forties at the time; let's see, I was 48. I had been with the construction firm for 15 years. You might say it was my baby. I had grown up with it and I was vice-president for sales. As far as I was concerned, I thought I would be there for the rest of my life. The president and I had been very close until one day, all of a sudden, a young man appeared who had just been graduated from M.I.T. He was about 25.

The president put David under my wing and told me, "You train him, and he'll be your assistant." I was assigned as his wet nurse. It was all right for a few months, but after he got himself fully involved in the company, little things started happening. This young man was very aggressive, ambitious, brash in a lot of ways, very under-

handed in a lot of little things that you could never put your finger on. I'd come home and tell my wife, "David was a little hard to handle today," or, "He knows it all; he's trying to tell me what to do. Not only that, but he has quite an effect on the boss. He seems to have him completely around his finger."

We were a small company. It had been handed down to the boss by his father. We had been getting along with an adequate profit and he seemed to be quite satisfied. I don't think he ever thought of expanding beyond the state line until this fellow came into the company and filled his head with all sorts of pipe dreams of expansion. The boss was completely overwhelmed by it.

The young man had the president's ear and opened up the outside world to him. The boss had never before been subjected to anyone like him. It had always been local people who worked for him and I don't think he was used to anything quite like this high-pressure thinking.

The boy was aggressive, full of new ideas. He wanted to change our whole concept of doing business. As soon as he came I knew that he was setting his sights on my position. I felt instinctively that I would be pushed out. I could tell; I don't know how. This boy came in ostensibly as an executive trainee but from the few remarks he made, I realized he was mostly interested in the sales end. My end.

David wanted to revamp the entire organization with his so-called progressive ideas. Get heavier machinery, be much more active in politics, particularly state politics. Up to that time the president had been rather small-townish. Not hibernating exactly. We had gone ahead very well as far as our little area was concerned. But that wasn't good enough. This boy wanted us to enlarge our operations.

I could never forget the incident that marked the turning point in my life. We were bidding on a big contract for a section of the Interstate Highway System. It was most important to our company. It would be one of the largest jobs we had ever undertaken.

I had completed all the initial interviews with the state highway officials after we had submitted our bid. I had phoned the highway commissioner to arrange for the final meeting. The commissioner said to please call him on Thursday and make an appointment to tie it up during the following week.

In the interim David mentioned that some new power shovels were being exhibited in a neighboring city and thought maybe I would want to go to inspect them. I said I couldn't. I didn't want to miss out on calling the commissioner but David assured me, "I'll be here, and I'll make the appointment for you for next week." And David said to the president, "Let Jim go, and I can call up and make the appointment for next week." So the president said, "Yes, why don't you do it?"

I went with our master mechanic to see the new shovels. I came back on Monday, after having been out of town for two days, and found that the whole thing had been wrapped up and that David had done it. The contract had been signed and the president was beside himself with pleasure. He told me that the young man had gone out and actually landed this contract.

I pointed out to the boss that the whole thing had been virtually signed, sealed, and delivered before I left. But the president showed annoyance with me and raised his voice. "Don't tell me that! Nothing is signed, sealed, and delivered until it's actually been signed. Don't take credit away from him just because he's a younger man. You couldn't have done any better than that, could you? He got the contract signed. Could you do more?"

Of course I admitted I couldn't. So he said, "Well, what more do you want?" As far as he was concerned, he was just delighted with David. The contract had been signed and he didn't care how it was signed or who maneuvered it.

I was extremely broken up about this because I was up against something I couldn't fight. I would go home and tell my wife, "My God, things are just terrible. I can't go in there again. I'll never last from Monday to Friday. I'm ready to throw up my hands and forget the whole thing. I

just don't want to go back. They're absolutely killing me in there."

My wife would say to me, "Get out of there if it's doing this to you." I'd ask her, "Where am I going to go? I am almost 50. Who will have me now? Look what I am up against, all these young men coming out of college with all these degrees behind them."

Well, sure enough, there were a couple more incidents like that and finally the boss called me in and gave me the word I was through. I went home and bawled like a baby. I admit it took away almost all my self-confidence. I began to feel that I had nothing to offer anybody. Where would I go, and what would I do? I couldn't get a comparable job and I hadn't been able to fight this thing. It really destroyed me.

I hope you don't find me despondent. I am exhausted. I am also bled white. It will take me a long time to recover. My best medicine would be peace of mind, and to have peace of mind I must not worry about what we are going to eat tomorrow. Who is going to pay the phone bill? The gas and electricity? Little problems, I know, but when they last so long, they drive you out of your wits.

I've been out of work for over a year now. Why can't I find a decent job like everybody else? I am beginning to feel antisocial, left over, abandoned, and it's tough. I don't think I deserve it. Why did it happen to me? I'm just too tired to think.

I don't have to tell you that this has put me way up the creek. I now have to get a job, any job, and I hate it so much! All my years down the drain! Will I ever recover? I doubt it. I was 51 last April 29th, and I feel like 100.

Now the story of a company career man who spent more than three decades in a single organization, rising from the bottom ranks steadily toward the top. He was halted just two levels below the presidency and then he found himself in the ranks of the unemployed:

I spent 32 years with the company. I was 25 years of age when I started as a salesman in the field in Ohio and

Indiana. Then, after an apprenticeship in the educational department, I was moved into Boston as manager of educational sales and government contracts—in other words, all business that was paid for by public taxation monies—federal, state, city, boards of education, or local school districts.

From there I moved out into the field as a district manager for all the company's divisions, including trade books, traveling from Maine to Florida along the Atlantic seaboard. Then back to headquarters office as assistant sales manager, next as sales manager, then vice-president of sales, and finally vice-president of marketing. I guess I was one of the best known men in my company but in fairness, I think this was because my travels approximately 50 percent of the time put me in very close contact with many of the company's customers—bookstores, department store buyers, as well as government officials at all levels.

Some things stand out in the early part of my training. When I was a neophyte I was greatly impressed by my immediate superior. This man, Mr. John Lawrence Preston, traveled around the six New England states. He was a tremendous person. He was very well liked by all of our customers and he secured many adoptions. That is, getting a school system to adopt our books as standard texts for the school year.

This man had a great flair for selling. I was always impressed by the fact that he tried to sell his books from a sample bag. He was a veritable pack horse as he traveled the New England states. He was loaded down with innumerable cases, the books arranged according to subject and grade level. Quite often it would take him three or four trips to and from the automobile to bring in the new editions that he had to show.

Believe me, this is not always done today. Many of our more brilliant salesmen, including the younger men, like to sell from a catalog that fits easily into the side coat pocket, I think basically because they are lazy. It takes muscle; it's hard work to carry the bags that weigh ten,

15, or 20 pounds. Negotiating stairs at some times, crowded elevators at other times, in and out of stores and revolving doors, and what not. This was one of the basic impressions that was made indelibly on my mind in the '30's. Mr. Preston influenced my style of working to a great degree. I got along with this man wonderfully well. He was a great personality. He was strong, very dynamic. He was quite a leader and he was looked up to by all of his customers.

Right after the war we began bringing out a completely new series of texts from elementary school right up through the 12th grade in anticipation of a rapid rise in the school population.

And in those days we recruited a lot of brand new salesmen. Most of them were ex-G.I.'s just back from the service. Some of them were hired too fast, did too poorly, and were too sloppy in their habits. Some were the dregs of humanity, trying to ride the crest of this so-called easy living era, and certainly it manifested itself in their sales activity. During this period I met some of the poorest excuses for salesmen that I have ever seen.

After the Korean conflict, and moving into the early '50's when I became head of the sales department, I had my share of the irresponsible salesmen, the ones who drank too much and spent too little time on the job and too much time off it. I guess every organization has its fair share of those. The company tossed this problem to me.

I moved in and of course I knew what to do because I had been out in the field for so long. I fired the no-goods; I trained the good men, and the results showed quickly.

I had followed the president up the ladder each time he stepped up another rung. He had come out of sales. For a good part of my 32 years, he was my immediate superior. When he became sales manager, I was made assistant sales manager. When he became general sales manager, I became sales manager. When he became executive vice-president, I became general sales manager.

We were completely harmonious, completely compati-

ble. He was a dynamic individual, a man who had gone a considerable distance without really much formal education. You don't see this type very often today. His savvy and his poise he had acquired himself, and he had a rare native instinct for doing the right thing business-wise. His mind was exceedingly sharp, great powers of perception, memory, all the wonderful attributes that really make good leadership. He was extremely well liked. He was a hard-working man and very demanding of those who worked under him. I think our entire relationship was one of intimate, friendly helpfulness.

I was always sure that I was going to move along with him when he moved. But when he became president, it was more or less thrown open for grabs who would succeed him when he stepped down. He was president for five years.

There were two rivals for the job of executive V.P. The winner would be the next president of the company. As vice-president of marketing I was one. The other was Harold Schlau, vice-president of manufacturing. I have to tell you he was 16 years younger than I, and somewhat dull for his age.

Nothing wrong with him. He was a rather solid individual, rather lackluster, a good technical man. Knew machinery; knew printing. In other words, he was ideally suited to the manufacturing portfolio.

He had been brought in a few years before to supervise the construction of our new plant. He had to select new typesetting equipment, new presses, the whole new technology, as well as equipment to manufacture our line of educational accessory products. He was in charge of the construction of the plant itself and of moving some equipment from the old plant.

He had just completed the job. It had been a tremendous task to move several hundred pieces of machinery and 100 van loads of stuff over the road and set up a brand new plant covering 175,000 square feet. There were trials and tribulations.

His activity at that time was very much in the eye of

management and the board of directors. It dwarfed my activities into insignificance. The company moved only once every 35 years or so and this was a rather important thing.

Every time the board met, Schlau was asked to report on progress of the move and the construction of the new factory. This exposure gave him a built-in advantage over me. He had an inside track with the board of directors. I doubt if I could have changed this. Even looking back on it, I doubt it.

He had been giving these regular reports for more than two years already when he and I were named to the board at the same time. My relationship with the outside members of the board obviously wasn't as good as his, or even as it might have been. I just didn't know them as well.

When the time came for the selection of the Number Two man, the president said our names would be given to a special committee of the board of directors and they would select one of us as executive vice-president.

The president gave me no inkling of his position. He stepped right out of my corner and assumed neutral ground. He played no role in the selection. The committee had a quick meeting overnight and they picked Schlau. That was the decision. At the next board meeting the formal vote was taken and that was it. There was nothing very elaborate about it.

After that things went along more or less as they had before. The president stayed on for about another year. On his retirement, Schlau was elected to the presidency. It was as simple as that.

I guess then I started to chafe a little because his leadership was not what our company was used to. It was, instead, what you would expect from a machinery man. A lack of vision, a lack of foresight.

Let me give you an example to illustrate how Schlau felt about sales and the importance of sales management—in other words how he felt about the importance of my job. He called me into his office one day and told

me he had hired a new sales manager for our Canadian venture. And I found out that Schlau had been vacationing with his wife and kids in one of the northern Vermont resorts and while there he had played a great deal of golf.

It turned out that our new Canadian sales manager had been the golf professional at this summer resort. Schlau liked him; we had a vacancy; they got together. That's the way it happened. And he had absolutely no qualifications whatever for the post of sales manager. I'll never forget the very, very strong directive that was given me. Schlau said, "I'm sorry; this is the way it is. Now it's up to you to make a sales manager out of him. Devote as much time and effort as you can to change him from a golf pro into a seasoned sales manager."

This was, of course, one of the biggest challenges ever put before me. So I spent many an hour with this young man trying to pour into his head, via the funnel route, as much information as I could. But it was a hopeless task, as you can imagine.

Nothing disturbing happened until late spring when our sales manager entered a golf tournament held by the local businessmen in Montreal. This meant that many of the store executives and buyers and so on would be congregating at the country club.

Our brand new sales manager made one mistake. He shot his normal round of golf, which was about 67, and of course that started the tongues wagging. It wasn't long before the informal investigative work took effect and they found out that he was a golf pro. That settled our hash in a hell of a hurry.

He shouldn't have entered an amateur competition but he thought he could get away with it. As a professional, he took an amateur prize which they rightfully felt belonged to a member of their own group. Of course we became a laughingstock because we had hired a golf pro to teach our salesmen how to sell. The net result was a complete fiasco and the young man finally put his tail between his legs and hightailed it back to Vermont.

With this sort of goings-on, you can imagine what happened to company morale. It manifested itself in board of directors meetings. Very specifically, the outside directors became critical of the lack of sustained growth in sales and profits. They became more vocal at each and every meeting.

Of course there was ■ tapering off in growth for one excellent reason which was totally out of my control. We lacked an imaginative, aggressive program of new product development. We needed to get ■ strong position in the field of programmed instructional materials and devices. This was under the manufacturing department and I couldn't get them to give sufficient money to the department. As I saw it, the product development department was poorly staffed and not very capably directed. But sales were off. I was responsible for sales.

I put up a constant hue and cry that we needed new products. Schlau would say, "Well, we'll have to do something about it." But nothing ever got done. I raised this at board meetings but they were not particularly interested. They were not being paid to settle these problems. They said this was not a matter for board discussion.

Another problem was the president's inability to harness expenses to our sales gait. This is almost as serious as a lack of new publishing ideas, new educational products. Letting the operating expenses crawl up on income can deteriorate profits faster than anything else.

This was a serious problem due to his inability to clean out unnecessary people. It's what I call corporate feather-bedding. It's ■ disease. Many executives have a great reluctance to fire somebody because they want to be nice guys. But if you take a real hard look, maybe instead of 50 people in the composition and makeup department, or maintenance, or such, you could get along with 30. This whole thing just permeated the organization. I often said that we had enough people to do a volume 50 percent larger.

Well, they blamed me for lagging sales. They blamed lagging sales for lagging profits. In this atmosphere of

gloom everybody began sparring for position and trying to blame somebody else for the shortcomings.

The situation continued to worsen and then the board started to inject itself more and more. They said I had not been contributing to sales growth, and then one day Schlau told me the board of directors wanted me to resign. He never said he did. Never. But one member of the board told me privately, "The president is insanely jealous of you. We've got to go along with him. We can't have the two top officers fighting with each other."

I never thought five years ago that this young fellow would be in a position to do this. I knew he was dangerous but I never thought he would be my comeuppance. You could learn from this experience how to tolerate stupidity. I don't know that I have learned that lesson yet.

But I see now some of the errors I made. One was to underestimate the kid. He is 41 now but I think of him as a kid. I should have been cultivating the members of the board in one way or another. I neglected them. The other error was to assume that my sales successes were enough to qualify me for the presidency. At the top level they want a man broad enough to run the whole company, not just sales, and I had never made a serious effort to learn production. If I had been qualified in both sales and production I would have had a big advantage over Schlau. There wasn't much to learn but the fact was I had never learned it. It's so easy to see the mistakes you've made after it's too late.

But despite my experiences I would advise any young man who's interested to go into sales. I think the selling profession is a wonderful way to earn a living. Based on the experiences I have had, however, I would urge a boy to avoid the smaller company, where this thing happened to me.

Right now I'll accept any job I can get in any company, large or small. I'm not in a mood to ask too many questions.

CHAPTER 14

Decision on Indecision

DURING these interviews more than one executive said to me, "Considering what goes on in our company, it's a wonder we still manage to stay in business. I shudder what would happen if they brought the management consultants in here."

So I thought it would be interesting to ask a management consultant his perspective on executive conflicts. Finally one agreed to talk, on condition that his comments would be well disguised to prevent identification. He is a senior member of a well-respected but small consulting firm on New York's Park Avenue.

But when he began to talk, it appeared that he had misunderstood the purpose of the interview. I wanted his observations on management infighting. Instead he began to tell me his troubles with his own boss, the head of the consulting firm:

Our firm is a small organization of management consultants. We specialize in the application of operations research and mathematical methods to corporate problems of various types. We also do a lot of EDP [electronic data processing] applications for airlines, insurance companies, retail chains, and so on. I won't go into too many specifics, because I don't want this story recognizable when it's published.

The man who started our firm was Ellis Johnson and he runs it today. This month we celebrate our 18th year of

business. I think we are unique in having lasted this long, and you'll agree when you hear the whole story.

We are not doing half as much business as I would like to. We seldom do much repeat business. The kind of assignment we frequently get is a one-shot project. One reason, of course, is the nature of our work, designing new systems and conversions to EDP. But another reason is Ellis' failure to follow through with the client and suggest additional assignments.

Once he has completed an assignment for somebody, he no longer finds a challenge there. He wants new fields to conquer, new things to try, something new to test. He has a short span of interest. This is childish, isn't it? I have often wondered if he has a short span of attention or merely a great multiplicity of interests. For instance he has written a book on chess playing. He's a self-taught chess expert and a pretty good one. He's also written a book on skin diving.

The one best word for Ellis is "enthusiast." He is certainly an enthusiast. He gets wildly excited by any unusual project we go into. Ellis was successful in building the business because of his tremendous enthusiasm and his great ability. He has a mind like a computer. He's the sort of guy, for instance, who will sit down and get an assignment on program instruction on differential calculus and do it just for fun, like somebody else would do a crossword puzzle.

You've got to look at his background as an operations researcher. He got himself involved during World War II. The same sort of thing that McNamara has been using at the Pentagon. Operations research is the application of very sophisticated mathematical principles to all aspects of business, money, production, personnel. He feels it can be applied to absolutely anything.

But while Ellis is tremendously bright, I don't think he is "people smart" at all. Management to Ellis is mathematics. He believes that it's controls, formulas, not people. And I keep saying to him, "Ellis, what about the people?" People scare him to death.

It shows. He carries this rigid attitude right into our own organization. Ellis insisted that we prepare job descriptions, standards of performance; all this for our small group. It is kind of ridiculous. We're not the size of the giant corporations we work for. A consulting firm of our size does not need a table of organization. I have said over and over again, "Ellis, we are a small group of people, technical consultants. Management to you means mathematics and charts. Management to me means people." He doesn't know what I am talking about.

There is a deep need in this man to be liked. Ellis must be liked or he's very hurt. To be sure that his clients will like him, he always gives them much more than they asked for. He doesn't bother to look at what it costs to do something and frequently he quotes flat fees or maximums below our actual manpower costs. He'd give the store away for all he personally cares about costs. It is very nice to build a reputation for fine service to clients, but I often feel that they are laughing secretly to themselves and saying, "Boy, we sure took that guy." We frequently do \$10,000 worth of work and charge \$6,000 for it.

On several occasions when he quoted a maximum fee which was certain to result in a loss, I would point it out to him. He'd say, "That's not important. We've got our foot in the door here." Well, I have heard that line for ten years. Or he'd say, "We're developing an approach we can put on the shelf and sell to other companies." This has never worked. This is not the nature of our business. But it has always been his excuse. You can imagine what he'd say if he discovered that one of our clients was selling their products at a loss. But when it came to us, his objectivity didn't seem to apply.

Ellis is always saying, "I want everything for my people. I'm very democratic." Once in the early days, before I learned where to stop, I said to him, "Let's look at the picture. Let's look at our business record. Let's look at our bad cost estimating, and see why we are losing money." He came back to me with, "That's not your function. I'll worry about that." Then he stalked out.

Recently, he has been bloody busy; he has been riding off in all directions. The guy is ■ genius, and he's a whirlwind. But even geniuses and whirlwinds have limits. You cannot be three places at once. For example, it has been very disappointing to me over the years that whenever Ellis has been asked to make a speech, instead of doing a little advance thinking and really working up something to stimulate his audience, he scribbles notes on the back of an envelope. The Abraham Lincoln bit on the way to Gettysburg.

He'll do a creditable job but he won't do half as well as he should or could. Recently, within the past two years or so, he's bumped up against slightly more sophisticated management audiences and the feedback hasn't been too good.

Ellis has been very unavailable lately; out of town a lot. He takes every opportunity for an out-of-town assignment. He'd much rather run a three-day A.M.A. [American Management Association] seminar someplace, for nothing, than stay in New York and run the store. That's always been a problem; he doesn't like to make decisions.

Early in the game, about a year or so after I joined the firm, Ellis' assistant left rather unexpectedly for another job. So I went to Ellis and applied for it. He was surprised at my request. He didn't feel that I was qualified for it or in line for it. But after we had talked for a few hours he began to consider me seriously.

Then he said to me, "Okay, I have a commitment to a man who is now at McKinsey. He must be offered the job first. If he doesn't want to leave there, the job is yours." I told him, "I'm going on vacation. Should I go?" He said, "Come on, you haven't had a good vacation since you came here. Enjoy yourself!" I went. That was a mistake.

Around Wednesday of the week I was away on vacation I got a call from another member of the firm. He said he had heard that this position had opened up, and should he go after it? He had considerable data-processing experience. "Look," I told him, "to be perfectly honest with you I have every reason to believe that the position is already filled."

A loud pause at the end of the phone and then, because he was a good friend, he said, "Congratulations. You deserve it. You should have it. I never thought of that. Obviously, you'd get it." Then he added, "That's wonderful. Can I tell anybody?" I said, "Well, nothing has been decided."

The next day he called me again and said, "I want to read you an interoffice memo. Are you sitting down?" The memo had just been distributed announcing the appointment of a third party whose name had never been mentioned. Not the McKinsey man; not me.

I'll tell you I didn't have a very happy couple of vacation days left. I went back and got ahold of Ellis. He asked, "You want to talk to me?" "You're damn right I want to talk to you." "All right," he said, "cool down. Let's talk over dinner." Well, he said he did this because he needed someone with heavy experience for a specific project to be announced shortly. When I reminded him of his promise about the job to me, he said, "Gee, I don't remember saying that. Maybe you read something into what I said. I couldn't possibly have agreed to that."

I made a mistake going on vacation because I didn't gauge my man right. Ellis is a man who doesn't like to make decisions. So the way for me to get the job was to avoid having Ellis make a decision. I should simply have moved into the job and put Ellis into the defensive position of saying, "Hey, get out of there. That isn't yours. I'm bringing in another guy."

If I made the decision that this job were mine, the possibility and probability was that he might have made the same assumption. By the time this sudden project was announced I could probably have been prepared to step into the vacuum. My presence and my preparation might have turned it.

When changes are in the offing, when a key man has suddenly departed, when there is a possibility that the next in line may move up, that's the time to start putting in the 10-or-12-hour day. Work right then and there. And stick close to the boss. But in this case, I went away; the guy decided not to leave McKinsey, and Ellis' panic set

in. "God, I must have someone today." Suddenly he felt alone, backed into a corner and deserted. So he merely reached out and grabbed the guy who was hovering in the wings anyway and who could say, "Here I am, your friend; I can help you out of this mess."

Afterwards his secretary told me I had made the mistake of going away at the moment when he needed me most.

"There's an old song you should have remembered," she gently reminded me. "When I'm Not Near the One I Love, I Love the One I'm Near." By now I've learned to play that on everything including the harmonica.

The funny thing is that Ellis always comments on executives who run away from decisions. He has contempt for them. But he doesn't see the same thing in himself. Even if I pointed it out to him, he wouldn't change. I don't believe he could change. This is an "old dog—new tricks" thing and I don't think he's built that way. He doesn't want to be a manager because when you make decisions, somebody gets bruised. If he makes an unpleasant decision for the good of the company, somebody won't love him. Makes you wonder, doesn't it, about the management consultants who have all the answers to your problems? If they're so smart—you know the rest.

He likes to kid himself that we are a growing outfit and that we are going someplace and will make a lot of money. This is one of his standard gambits. It's pretty hollow if you have been around the staff a while, because we are not growing; we are not expanding; and we are not making a lot of money.

One of our recurring problems is acquiring new business. Ellis has not, in the ten years I have been there, ever knowingly sought new business.

When business comes in over the transom, Ellis handles it beautifully. He is good at closing the sale because of his enthusiasm and his ability to project what we can do for the client. But all in all, our client acquisition has been poor.

Ellis is a great problem-solver; he's a creative consultant,

but he can't go out and find the business. He won't go after it because if they turned him down he'd take it to mean they didn't like him.

You sit there and watch the business go downhill steadily and you know the reason why, but Ellis was literally unaware of this. He had not looked at our sales records in a year, or if he had, he had ignored them completely. He had taken no action other than to look for a new business man to develop contacts, which is not the way to operate. Direct solicitation, of course, is forbidden by our professional ethics. After all, we're not selling magazine subscriptions. That, by the way, was his only sales experience. He sold magazine subscriptions when he was in college.

Ellis is a wonderful boss but he is not an effective boss. He doesn't come in and say, "I don't think you should do that." He doesn't keep an eye closely on things. He gives you a free hand, which is delightful if you like it, but for ten years he hasn't had a remote idea of what I'm doing. All he knows is that the clients are happy with my work. He wants to be left alone because then I am off his back.

Because he needs to be liked, he cannot hire. He never has been able to. When he interviews someone, he'll say, "Now you've been responsible for budget planning, haven't you? You know your way around pensions, don't you? You've had experience on the 7094, haven't you?" He gives all the answers, you see.

He knows it isn't a good way to interview and he would criticize a client who did it that way. But he seems unable to change. So now he often delegates hiring to me. Once when we needed people, I interviewed a good man; I had Ellis interview him; and I hired him for \$3,000 a year less than Ellis was going to pay him. Ellis couldn't understand how I did it.

He doesn't fire anybody. He cannot bring himself to do it. I have finally taken over this for him too. It's part of wanting to be liked. You can't run a business in order to be liked. If you really want to be liked by your people, you owe them good communications. If you have a profit-

sharing plan as we have, you owe them profits and a report of those profits. We don't have this.

Somebody had to say something to him. Finally I did. "Be a boss," I told him. "Be a firm manager. Don't hold staff meetings to make decisions. You make the decisions and carry them out. I think we should face the fact that we are a small organization, and we lack only one thing—a boss." He certainly didn't take kindly to that, and most assuredly I never again brought up the subject. It reminded me of his encounter years before with John Vigerhouse, our vice-president.

John had been with Ellis for eight years. He was a balance wheel; he was the guy who slowed him down. He was the "no" man. They had begun in one small office with desks face to face, and little more than two telephones and one secretary. And they still had that close relationship.

In the beginning, when they were just two men, they lunched together and talked plans and problems and so forth. John had put a lot of his own money into the business. He had been repaid; don't get me wrong. Ellis had paid back every cent of it. But John felt that this gave him a right to speak freely.

I remember that John at that time criticized a report that Ellis had written. John said, "I would suggest that it might be wiser to do it this way." And for the first time, I saw Ellis turn around and his beautiful sparkling eyes just turned steely blue. And he said, "This is my company and we'll do it my way." That was a great warning flash right there. John was very hurt. Thereafter Ellis bypassed him and just a few months later, John left Ellis to join one of our clients.

After John's departure everyone expected me to get the title of vice-president. I expected it too. In fact, I remember holding off on something I was doing because I felt the vice-presidency would be announced momentarily. Prior to this time, Ellis had told me—in fact, he said it flat out—"Some day, you are going to take over this company." I waited and waited and waited but nothing happened.

Thereafter on a number of occasions I asked Ellis either for the title of V.P. or a raise, or both. The problem with raises is that he himself does not need money. He's a rich man's son; he's well-heeled. The company salaries are tagged to Ellis' salary. He doesn't need a raise so nobody else gets one.

Finally I made up my mind to be tough and to demand action. The timing was right. I had just successfully completed a complex and difficult assignment. I told Ellis I wanted to be V.P. of the firm. I had been with him a long time, and I was the Number Two man. I said frankly that I felt a little squeamish because I didn't have the title. Ellis kept telling me that the title wasn't important, and I kept repeating that there was a status to the title that was important to me.

Finally he said, "I want to put a stop to this once and for all. I'll give you the biggest raise you ever had in your life if you never again ask me for the title. I'll give you a raise of \$5,000 a year if you shake hands right now and agree not to bring up this title thing anymore." I said, "Shake. It's a deal." I immediately went from \$20,000 to \$25,000. I never again brought up the question.

You can see from my story that I have no great problems in dealing with Ellis. My criticisms are essentially that he doesn't manage his own company or handle his own staff as he tells clients to manage theirs. And this has limited our growth and our profits.

But as far as he and I are concerned, I've followed a policy of expressing myself honestly only up to the point where the steely look would appear in his blue eyes. That incident with John years ago was the tip-off that there was a line beyond which I couldn't cross.

I began to take over decision making as much as possible, and he likes this. I leave to him all policy decisions. For example, what services are we going to develop? I give him options. I come to him with a cafeteria tray and say, "Ellis, we can do A, B, or C. Which do you want to do?" And I try to influence him toward the choice I believe is best. It's possible to build up a case by the way you present the facts. Never, however, do I ask his per-

mission to make decisions because that would force him to recognize his own shortcomings. I just go ahead and do it and he accepts it.

I saw Ellis needs praise so I give him compliments. I tell him constantly that he's done a good job on such-and-such. And he glows. He also gets a little shy and child-like. He doesn't know how to respond. But he appreciates it very much. I don't have to lay it on with a heavy hand because I am being very honest that he has done a hell of a good job. I don't have to pay him phony compliments. He's damn good although I have often thought if he is really that bright, why doesn't he smarten up and practice what he preaches to clients?

Where he has not done a good job on something, I just don't bring it up or allude to it.

I have tried to tell Ellis that honest praise is the easiest way to get more work out of people. Yet, in ten years he has never said, "Gee, Paul, that was a fine piece of work you did." Only belatedly now has he said some very nice things about an assignment I did for the airline. But he has never brought himself to compliment me directly, which is interesting. He says nice things about me to others when I'm around to hear them; that's as far as he can go.

Our firm won't go anywhere, up or down. We'll probably just keep coasting along. I'll stay with it indefinitely because I have no serious complaints. And if we ever run into trouble, it shouldn't be too difficult for me to land somewhere else.

After all, I have ten years experience working for one of the most able management consultants in New York.

CHAPTER 15

Battle by Remote Control

IF all executives were judged by their immediate superiors, they would at least know whose approval and goodwill they needed to survive. But in today's vast corporate organizations the decisions affecting local executives are often reached in distant cities by sometimes faceless senior executives.

In these situations the pipeline to corporate headquarters becomes crucial to the careers of local executives. While the local manager uses his line of communication to enhance his reputation back in the home office, his subordinates may open their own pipelines to destroy him. The standard techniques are the memo, the telephone call, and the personal contact.

When the plot bursts into the open, strange things come to the light of day. Peter Treadwell, a veteran and tough executive of a local electronics distributor, told me of his relations with corporate headquarters:

Our distributorship had just been sold to one of the major national companies. I had handled part of the negotiations on behalf of the former owner. The assumption was that I would stay on as general manager under the new ownership.

The negotiations had not been easy. I had taken a rather hard bargaining position at one point, and I finally ground it down their throat because that was the job I had been sent back East to perform. When the terms were worked

out in principle, the owner sent me back to New York to negotiate the commas and the periods.

Then, after the papers had been signed and the new owners were now my employers, they told me that they had assigned a man to work with me. He turned out to be one of the prime characters they had at company headquarters.

He was ■ young man who was, as they say, well connected. His father was a major stockholder in the corporation. He had no experience in the electronics business. He was 23 years old. They gave him check-signing power. He in turn began to assemble a staff around him. It took me some time to realize the implications because I thought I was running our local office and warehouse. He assembled around him a group of kids with whom he had gone to college.

Now let me tell you a strange story and all I can say is, anyone who doesn't believe in Freud is a bad businessman. I come into my office one day and there's an envelope on my desk addressed to me. No stamp, but it's sitting on my desk. A large sealed manila envelope.

I opened it up and inside was an entire file of reports that had been written to the parent company in New York. Apparently the young guy was sending this back East. Somehow—don't ask me to explain it—but maybe out of his own Freudian sense of guilt, he had written my name on the envelope and it had gotten into the outgoing mail. The mail clerk came in to sort it, saw my name on the envelope, and left it on my desk.

There was the whole thing. "Treadwell thinks he's running the place. He's making his own decisions." The whole strategy.

I got ahold of this kid and pulled him into my office, sat him down, and waved the sheaf of papers in front of him. He turned gray. He started to cry. He said, "This is going to ruin my life. It's going to ruin my career." I said, "Well frankly, I hope so. Because if it doesn't, I will. I'll tell you one thing. We're going over to the office of the vice-president [he was my new boss] and you're going to

tell him the whole story. By the time I'm finished with you I'm going to make sure you'll never work in this industry again." This was a little bit of braggadocio on my part, as I soon discovered.

Apparently immediately after I had called this kid, he made a call himself. In the interval between the time I told him what I was going to go, getting our coats, and the time we arrived at the vice-president's office, he made a couple of calls. And I gather that the vice-president was alerted to the fact that I had blown my stack and was ready to depart. After my discovery I really didn't want any further part of this outfit. I just wanted to set the record straight and go home. Because there was obviously no point in my continuing to work for these people in any shape or form.

The young fellow walked in with me to the meeting. I had the papers with me and said, "Walt, I want to show you something." And I conducted the whole conversation. The vice-president sat behind the desk and said nothing.

I asked the kid if it were true he had been writing these reports. I got tears and I said, "Stop sniveling. They're yours, aren't they?"

"Yes."

"Why have you done this?"

"Well, I don't know."

I said, "You don't know, or you're covering someone in New York who told you to write this kind of report?"

"No," he said, "I guess I was just greedy, and I thought I could take over. I turned in reports that would make you look bad."

"But," I said, "somebody authorized you to turn in the reports. You obviously wouldn't be reporting on me as your superior officer in this corporate structure unless you had been told to do so."

"Well, I wasn't told to do so."

At that point it became obvious that he was covering the man at headquarters who had instructed him to take this kind of action. The whole theory was that if they could convince the president that I was worthless to the

organization, then it would be easier for them to renege on the promises that they had made to me. This would simplify the whole of squeezing me out.

It was a very peculiar situation because the vice-president didn't want to listen. Didn't want to read the written reports. I don't know how he thought those pieces of paper got there. Anyway, he wanted no part of it.

The vice-president took no action because he obviously knew that headquarters wanted it that way. I think he was also escaping from an unpleasant situation. So he just ducked. It was a fast swivel and that was that. I got a \$5,000 severance check and I left.

Now it was pretty clear that guilt was involved because a \$5,000 severance check on a \$10,000 salary was unlikely. Yet that's what they paid me to leave.

In the broadcasting industry, I heard a similar story from James McGee, who stood by and watched two of his superiors dismissed by corporate headquarters. The program director brought about, at least in part, his own doom, as Jim tells it. But the general manager fell when a subordinate used the corporate pipeline skillfully and destructively:

I just knew that man was going to end up in trouble from the day he went after the job. He was a friend of mine but he was a bit too sure of himself. He had been working as a program director at another radio station and I assumed he was after the job of program director at the station where I worked. But he told them that since he was already a program director, he wouldn't take the same job again. He was holding out for general manager or nothing.

Monday morning they brought him in for breakfast and they said, "Okay, you're sure you don't want to be program director?" He said, "Absolutely not. I will not be a program director for you." They said, "Okay, you're now general manager." Then they gave him his choice of program directors from within the organization. He picked

a guy with whom he had a very good relationship. Brought him in from Miami where he had been extremely successful; one of the most successful program directors in the business.

All kinds of things then began to happen. We put a unit together. For a while it was a well-functioning team. There was a lot of *esprit de corps*. Everybody liked the general manager tremendously and he carefully picked his people. He seemed to have a free hand. Then gradually you could see the influence of the headquarters operation begin to cut into his freedom.

Now, the company retains the fiction, and has for years, that its stations are autonomous. But at one point I received a call from the national program director. The national program director is extremely talented, brilliant, good at carrying through, and a good writer. He called me up one day to suggest a project and I said, "Gee, I don't think the general manager will go for that."

And the roof blew off. His exact words were, "I don't give a damn what he says. I like you. Don't get me mad at you. You know damn well who runs this company. You know who told me to tell you to do this. Don't give me this crap about the general manager. Don't start me."

I said, "It seems I've started you already. But okay, mission accomplished." He said, "That's better. Just be a good boy."

So I was a good boy. I went in to see the general manager. I said, "Guess what we're going to do?" He blew. I said, "Don't blow at me. You know where I got it from, and you know where he got it from." We did it. Little things like that.

Pretty soon, we got the word from corporate headquarters that we were to modify the music policy of the station. It had been rock and roll. They softened it, not by a decision of the general manager, but by a corporate decision against the general manager's recommendations.

He wanted to rock a while longer and see what would happen. Feel out the market. Make a transition. Cor-

porate said, "No, we don't want this kind of a station because it's bad for our image. It's loud. It's rockish. It's this. It's that." The general manager and the program director were in agreement that we should keep rock and roll. But it went.

Headquarters decided to make a reputation for news and public affairs. So they doubled the size of the newsroom; doubled the number of newscasts daily. Then we went from five minutes of news on the hour to ten on the hour and five on most half hours. The station had never even had a half hour of educational programs; it now went to two and a half hours. It had "paid religion" on the air, the evangelists. We threw them off. We were spending money like it was going out of fashion.

The program director really had no control because he was taking orders from headquarters. He began to get frustrated. He showed increasing inability to get along with people. He began to drink, heavy drinking, bottle-a-day drinking, early morning drinking. They had not considered the fact that the guy had a home in another city. He found it more expensive to purchase a home here in town than he had ever anticipated. Couldn't bring his wife and kids until the other house was sold, and was living alone in hotel rooms. They allowed him 90 days of hotel rooms at company expense and then cut it off, so he was now supporting house and family in Miami, and himself here. And at the same time trying to hunt for a house and run this operation. When he finally sold his Miami house, he took a heavy cash loss which wiped out his savings. He used to get in at 7:30 in the morning, and leave at 1:00 in the afternoon. He wouldn't come back after lunch. And because all these other things were happening, it began to get at him. It got at him bad.

This program director, by the way, was a loved man. He was a man for whom any one of us would have gone to hell and back. And some of us did, but it did no good. We couldn't prop him up enough after a while and we couldn't cover him enough.

So finally one day it came. Out. They moved him into something called Sales Development, which hadn't existed up to that moment.

That was one down. He bit the dust. The general manager was now the next to face the corporate guns. He should have cleaned up his administrative mess but he didn't. He didn't want to make personnel decisions. That's why he hadn't fired the program director. He should have fired the chief engineer long before he did. The business manager too should have gone long before he did. The general manager had allowed things to reach crisis stage. It was simply incompetence. His failure to make decisions hurt him. I am sure it was one of the things they later used against him.

The general manager was a boy doing a man's job. He was a very sweet man who was doing a job that at that point required a more ruthless approach. A colder approach, perhaps, for the benefit of a greater number of people. He tended to accept the excuses rather than jump immediately to the underlying reasons behind them. So if the business manager would say, "Gee, I just haven't been able to get to that yet," the boss didn't know enough about business procedures to go into the accounting department and examine the books to figure out the actual state of affairs. He let money run away from him too.

Well, if the general manager had had troubles with an alcoholic program director and with interference from corporate headquarters, he didn't know what was ahead of him.

At that point headquarters sent in a new program director, a guy whose career I had studied with a great deal of interest. He had been program director in one city; got out and the station fell apart. Went to a network show, and that fell apart. Went out to the Coast for another show after that, and that fell apart. Came back to New York and was given this assignment. The first day this guy arrived, I walked in to the general manager, to whom I owed a primary allegiance, and I said, "I'm worried. I know this guy. You don't."

He said, "Look, I'm a big boy now. I'm covered. I have friends too." I said, "I don't know if you have friends like he has friends. Baby, please watch yourself." It took four months. It was a beautiful job of sabotage. This guy, in his capacity as program director, went through the routine, gave no directions to talent, did really nothing about program format.

But he had several little techniques. We used to have evening staff meetings; long ones, good ones, I thought. They aired a lot of the frustration and tension and got us back on the track. Well, he couldn't make evening meetings. What about early morning meetings? No, he couldn't make them either. It now meant that we were taking large chunks out of the day for staff meetings. I don't think sabotage is too strong a word to use. He was sitting there and going through the paces, all the while giving the right memos to the right people at headquarters level.

One of the first things this guy did when he came in was to tell the staff, "By the way, I will represent our department at staff meetings from now on." In other words, right from the start, he was consolidating his power. He cut the lines of communication between his subordinates and top management. Well, it didn't work in my case. By agreement with the general manager I was considered a department head and attended staff meetings, which I had insisted on. I wouldn't ever go into that jungle without the privilege. So I went to the general manager the next morning and said, "I want to remind you that we have an agreement." He said, "Don't worry, I'll take care of it." He did.

But there was no such agreement with other people. Their presence at staff meetings might have helped support the general manager because there's always a leakage out of station staff meetings back to friends at the headquarters level. I think that the leak of what was happening at staff meetings, fed back to properly placed people at the corporate level, might have saved the general manager. Something was needed to offset what the program director was saying about him.

One of the things the program director did was to send memos to people who shouldn't have had them. He was airing the internal dissension to the corporate level. It made the general manager look bad.

As far as I was concerned the handwriting was on the wall for the general manager. I know this: he never expected it. He thought he was safe. It got so ludicrous that one day a secretary called me up and said, "Who gets the memo?" It seems there were two memos to the same man at headquarters, one from the general manager and one from the program director, and they were directly contradictory. By mistake they had both been addressed to the corporate lawyer. Some secretary had obviously goofed.

It got to the point where people at headquarters were openly commenting on the battle of the memos. Everybody was sending copies to everybody else. The manager knew they were being sent but he felt his position was still strong enough. Finally on a Wednesday afternoon he was called in and by Friday he was out. Number Two to bite the dust. He was stunned.

They played it as a promotion. But the new job was a phony, something just to tide him over until he could find work. He stayed there at headquarters three or four months; I'm not sure. Finally he did find an excellent job in another city, also on a managerial level.

I think my general manager friend was an escapist, because he admitted openly that he was aware of the situation and yet he took no positive steps, other than perhaps the memorandum route, to save himself. He assumed that he had friends who would protect him. This is a breed of escapist. Perhaps a very highly polished breed.

Then he ran away from the unpleasant reality that, sooner or later, he was going to have to face the new program director in open competition. And maybe it was also escapism to think that he was smarter than the program director. He may have been but he didn't have the political leverage this guy had. This is escapism.

I don't know that he could have stopped him. But I think he did wrong to accept this guy in the first place. I

think that was the point at which he should have gotten out openly and cleanly and saved himself four months of aggravation. Put it on the line and say, "Okay, if he comes, I go."

I know people who have done it. Generally, they were in a position to lay it on the line. They were holding an ace card, either another offer, or sufficient knowledge and experience that would lead to another job.

You can't bluff that you're going to quit. But if you have the resources to back it up, that's not a bluff. You can get away with it. I know one guy that did. A man who had been public relations director and wanted to get into programming. He said he would leave unless they made a programming slot for him. They did. But how much of a bluff this was you never know. I don't know how much the man had in the bank before he took that step.

I think it is essential to understand that sometimes a situation can become absolutely hopeless. Then you must either make your demand or get out. Otherwise you find yourself caught in a personally corrosive pattern of inefficiency. When you start living a life of frustration, this is the time to get out.

Years ago a guy in the advertising business told me he spent three years during the depression working in a toy factory. As a toy horse came by on the assembly line, he would stick a bunch of feathers in the rear for a tail. He said that when he finally got a real job he thereafter put into the bank 10 percent of everything he made so that he'd never again have to stick feathers in horses' rears. And if he ever got to the point where he felt he had to make a jump for a career's sake, he would be able to do so because he had the resources.

You remember Bert Jordan who was vice-president of one of the networks. Lost the job and was out of work for about two years. Fortunately for Bert, his wife was a very successful actress. He would take her down to the train in the morning. They had a big house in Connecticut and they had managed to hang onto it. One day their six-

year-old kid said, "Why do all the other mommies drive their daddies to the train, and my daddy drives my mommy to the train?" That incident almost broke him.

Bert finally wound up in a top agency position after two or three years of no work. So in his case it was worth sweating it out. But I don't know what a guy living on that scale would have done if it were not for the fact that his wife was pulling in \$20,000 a year as a successful actress.

I think it's terribly important to accumulate a cushion which allows you some freedom of choice. Otherwise you're trapped completely. I think any guy in the \$15,000-a-year bracket ought to put away \$5,000. Or whatever it takes you to live on for one year, plus whatever you can borrow, and the other resources you can muster. And unemployment insurance, of course. Tie it all up in such a way that you can't even get at it unless it's a matter of absolute necessity.

That little safety valve is absolutely essential because it gives you a psychological freedom. My job here at the moment is quite secure but I know that if I'm out of work for a year, I'll be able to live through it. It won't be the kind of problem I had last time, when at the end of nine months I was probably \$3,000 or \$4,000 in debt. I borrowed it from the family. Next time I won't have to. Never again. If the general manager had that kind of a cushion, I think he might have been able to stand his ground, force out the program director, and save his job.

When an executive loses his post there is rarely one single reason why. In this case the general manager started with policy differences with his corporate management. In addition, he failed to act decisively on his administrative problems.

So his superiors had perfectly valid criticisms of his performance. But by themselves those shortcomings probably wouldn't have been enough to cost him his position unless the program director had been out for his blood and his job. Only then did his problems become critical.

The program director was a skilled axman. He avoided taking positive actions of his own, for they might fail and lay him open to criticism. As soon as he moved into the local station he cut off his subordinates from any contact with the corporate headquarters. Thus there would be no one to challenge him but his boss. And he proceeded deftly to contradict the boss by sending his own memos to headquarters.

The general manager felt confident he could handle the program director. This blind optimism, which Jim McGee called escapism, proved his eventual downfall. As Jim points out, the manager couldn't stop the disruption once it had gotten underway. At the time he might have acted, he didn't and couldn't because he lacked a financial cushion.

When the chips were down, the general manager couldn't cope with an underling who knew how to exploit the corporate pipeline.

Working in an office distant from corporate headquarters is a common executive situation. Jim McGee told me he thinks it's a good insurance policy to try to develop personal contacts at the headquarters level. His advice to others was, "Maybe you now have occasional reason to contact an executive at corporate headquarters. If so, try to broaden your strictly business relationship. As long as it's all business, you can't go outside channels. But transform a business relationship into a social one, and nothing can stop you from phoning, or writing, or visiting your friend from time to time.

"Because if someone begins sending memos about you, it will be reassuring to know that you can also send memos about him. Where necessary for survival, two can play at the same game."

CHAPTER 16

Working on the Railroad

ALL of us place the best possible interpretation on our actions. We like to think that we're decent, honorable people. Maybe the other guy would use jungle warfare tactics to win job advancement, but not us; we wouldn't stoop to such methods.

When, out of desperation, ambition, or the urge to self-preservation, we bare the corporate stiletto, we manage to find a dozen reasons why our action is proper, decent, and in the best interests of the company. The other man is holding up progress. He's getting in the way. Out with him! If the deed can be done with surgical precision, so that he never knows what hit him, so much the better.

And indeed, the assassinated executive seldom does know what hit him. The corporate murderer's favorite weapon, the damaging innuendo, operates through a third party, while all the while the gunman sincerely protests his loyalty and innocence.

Such was the technique used to shoot down Gus Bass, a railroad administrative executive of 63. If an FBI "Man Wanted" poster were to describe the man who did it, it would read, "Armed and considered extremely dangerous." This man was Hugh Cotton, age 38, and assistant to Bass. Bass was seasoned, tough, and once—but no longer—a confident, self-assured man. Cotton was ruthless, ambitious, and a man who played the game to win by fair or foul.

He was a wily infighter and he knew how to capitalize on every mistake his boss made. Bass made many errors; no more probably than did Cotton himself, but that wasn't the point. Cotton saw to it that top management quickly knew of every error that Bass made. When top management had been sufficiently convinced of Bass' incompetence, Cotton could then assume a self-righteous pose of seeming to defend his boss.

I am an old railroad buff, and through contacts on one of the roads, I was able to persuade both Bass and Cotton to tell me their stories. Each visited me separately and neither knew the other was talking. In their stories it's interesting to note the virtuous explanations each gave for his own behavior, as contrasted with the villainous intent each ascribed to his enemy.

Gus Bass was the first to visit me:

In the old days, the entire top executive level was secure. Your job was safe if you had been with the railroad 10 years. You knew whether or not you were doing a competent job. In those days your boss would tell you if you weren't. You were responsible to him and you got your report from him. You didn't get it from some third party.

Then after the war they brought in the business management appraisal groups, and from then on I doubt if more than a dozen out of a thousand felt secure. As soon as those boys came in, you became insecure because you didn't know what the outside experts were telling your boss about you.

I don't know if business is any better managed today, but it's no fun anymore. There's not the pride in trying to push the business ahead. The insecurity shows by lack of peace of mind and lack of fellowship. Everybody has too many reports to write, and instead of just running his department to make a profit or do the job, he has to go through volumes of paperwork to prove it to everybody else. There's no such thing anymore as a safe executive job on the railroad. The tenure in the top levels has been very short since the war.

Here I am, close to retirement, and these young guys are after my job. They can't even wait until I step aside. Two years isn't soon enough for them. There's nothing wrong with their wanting my job, but they ought to have the decency to wait until I'm retired.

I don't think I have ever before had an open-and-shut case of a man going after my job with unethical methods. But some of the young fellows needed watching so that they didn't spend more time going after my job than doing the job I had assigned to them.

They didn't realize that the one thing they lacked was the judgment that I had acquired only from making a lot of mistakes myself back in the past. They would make mistakes because they were in too much of a hurry. They would not check with me. They would forget to go where they should have gone and forget to do what they should have done.

So I would just come straight out and tell them they were spending too much time trying to do my work. If they got too ambitious, I would just keep them traveling up and down the line covering big towns and little ones. Most of them got the message. After I had brought them under control, I would treat them just like all the rest. I wouldn't hold anything against them. I'd tell them they were getting an A for effort and a gold star on their toothbrush chart, but now let's get back to doing the job they were hired for.

My work would keep me away from home base for two or three days at a time on troubleshooting assignments. So a man who worked for me had to be a self-starter to carry on while I was away. And a 100-percent team player too. If he wasn't, he became a fellow I had to watch.

If a young fellow wants a promotion, there's a right way to get it. I'd say to the young man, "Let your boss look good. That's the quickest way to get his job." There's an awful lot of difference between paying attention to your job and apple-polishing. One will kill you. Men that are secure in their jobs can smell apple-polishing a mile away and most of them resent it. They don't have time for it.

I used to say, "It's your skunk. You skin it. Just let me

know first." In other words, "You do your job. Don't come running to me unless you need help." I had an ironclad rule that if a man got into trouble or made a mistake, he should call me even if it was the middle of the night, because I would rather hear it from him than from some passenger or somebody in another department. When you deal in service to the public, you're bound to make some mistakes.

And they did call me. The men who worked for me learned I'd stand by them just as my boss stood by me. When he was promoted to vice-president—Traffic—I went to his successor and said, "You may want to bring in your own team. Feel free to transfer me if you wish." The fellow who was coming in said to the departing one, "What do you think?" He said, "I'd keep him," which made me look awfully good.

So the new man kept me and asked me if I'd serve out my remaining time by training some of these young men on the way up. I'd go from one job to another, wherever they needed me. That was how I happened to be sent out here to work with Hugh Cotton.

Hugh and I had a very fine relationship. He had come out of the railroad's real estate department to become station manager for the railroad in a city along the main line. This was the first time he ever had an assignment like this and I was assigned to train him.

Hugh was extremely happy with his new assignment because he wanted to be a big man around town. He was 35, I would guess. I've got 30 years experience up on him. I'm 63. That's a whole generation apart.

We got off to a good start. First place, he made known to everybody—suppliers, contractors, the union representatives—that I was a top authority in station management. He was delighted that he had this vast experience wrapped up and delivered to him. He wouldn't make any moves without checking with me to the point where it became almost ridiculous. Like, "Is it time to go to lunch? Do we have any big decisions to make during lunch, or after five o'clock?" It was pleasant working with

him, helping him to learn the job. He didn't show any jealousy for the first six months.

I didn't treat him in any special way. I paid him proper respect among the staff because his career with the road was ahead of him. I was temporary help. I had two years until retirement. I had made my reputation. I tried very hard to build him up. I even told the division officials that if Hugh was going to do his job well for the railroad, they should encourage him to become active in the Chamber of Commerce and community affairs, because you can meet shippers and plenty of other people that way. And they did. And I think right there is where our honeymoon ended. It was over a year ago when the relationship began to deteriorate and as I trace it back, it was from that month.

If you know the railroads, you know that normally this approval wouldn't be easy to get. But I carried enough weight to put it across for him. You'd think he would have loved me for it, but he didn't.

Hugh wanted all his permanent associates to feel that he had received this privilege because of sheer, unadulterated ability, and not just something laid on him just as a tool for his job, which he knew it was, I knew it was, and the top officials knew it was.

Another incident shortly after this was a tip-off too. He apparently felt it was necessary to put me in my place and show me who was in charge here. The major stumbling block to our relationship was that while I was breaking him in, I was supposed to have absolute authority to hire or fire anybody, subject, of course, to our union contracts.

Well, Hugh posted an order over his own signature saying that he would be final authority on hiring and firing. I was to interview them and turn them over to him. But he would have the final judgment.

Finally I said to him, "Let's sit down one of these days and decide how we are going to parcel out this authority for signing vouchers, authorizing expenses, ordering materials, and that sort of thing. Because the suppliers and

vendors are getting very unhappy with the slowness with which they are being paid."

Hugh's answer was, "I will never release the tiniest bit of this authority because that's how I got where I am." I certainly thought he was kidding, but I found out that he wasn't.

He soon became intolerable to the point where it was just unpleasant to go to work. It was an environment where personal abuse was flung not only at me but at others. When he didn't think the station plaza was being cleaned well, he got right outside the building and started to scream at the cleaning men across a quarter of a city block. I was there. This was a lot for my benefit. He made such a ruckus that some passenger thought he was demented and went to call the city police. I got him out of there before the cops arrived.

It was an indication that he was unstable. Power was going to his head. He'd walk into an office and ask, "What have you done since three days ago when I came in here last?" It was totally ridiculous because these men knew their business, and Hugh Cotton was the only one who wasn't experienced. These were exercises to inflate his ego and to make him feel he was the quarterback.

When he decided to put in automatic sandwich machines so employees could get a sandwich without going over to the station restaurant, he sent me this memo:

Concerning the sandwich machine, I will decide where to place it, and in the meantime you will hold a staff meeting of the section heads and decide what kind of sandwiches should be put in it. Before you order the sandwiches, please send the list to me for my final approval.

If he couldn't decide himself what kind of sandwiches to order, we didn't need him. What was he good for? Or when the paper towels would occasionally run out in the public rest rooms, he would write me a memo before asking the porter to refill them. By the time I got it, if it hadn't been fixed, it would have been too late.

From that and a few other little items, it was obvious we

weren't going to be able to work together. I guess this was about seven months after I came there.

I could have taken it, or I could have made an issue of it. I suppose I could have challenged Cotton and gone to the division top brass and insisted, "Is it him or me?" But I had an unusual circumstance there, as I pointed out. I was two years from retirement. If I had gone to the boss, he just might have decided to force me to retire early. He could have done it by making my life miserable. So I'm just sweating it out and waiting for my next assignment.

Now Hugh Cotton gives his version of the same events from his own perspective:

This is going back to 1962 when I first came in. The top boss was a very cautious man. He emphasized to me that I really knew nothing about my responsibilities as station manager and he couldn't trust me with authority until I had acquired experience.

He made a quote to the effect that I would be working for Gus. The understanding was that in the beginning Gus would have full authority. I never had anything in writing on this. Although I had the title of station manager, I would work for him as if I were his assistant. The first interview, we spent one solid hour, I'd say, maybe an hour and a half, going over this one particular point.

I was at that time 38 years old. Gus had been with the railroad since he got out of high school in 1917. That would make him about 63. He wanted to teach me how he operated and he was extremely firm, I'd say, rigid. I think this has a bearing. He really didn't want a strong man who would operate on his own.

It showed in his questioning. Whatever work I was doing, "How did you decide this?" He accepted nothing on faith. You had to go back to facts on everything you did. "Well, find out," he'd say. "Get the papers out on it. Go through the files."

I was not as concerned about job security as he was. He

was interested purely in security. He knew he would be out on the street in two years, and what would he do then?

I told him that I didn't think he fully appreciated the exposure that I would get in this position with businessmen and public officials in town. He said he understood that was important to me. After we began working together, he became very businesslike, very impersonal. I joined him in February, and he had me organize all the financial information about our operation and set up our budget. He was the teacher. Although he had been worried about it, he seemed to feel much better when he studied my work. He said I had done a good job.

I would ask his opinion on everything that affected railroad policy. At this point, I think he would have given me the moon if I wanted it, frankly, because he knew I was leaning on him. If you make him look good and he gets all the credit, he can't do enough for you.

When he was out, I was supposed to have full authority to act as station manager. But while he was on vacation I acted on my own, which, by the way, I was supposed to do, according to him.

He had wanted me to wait until he came back from vacation so I could at least get his opinion before taking action. But I made those decisions in his absence. It was probably something that he would have supported anyway, but merely because I didn't try to reach him and clear it, he was upset. To him, this meant that I couldn't be trusted. He may even have felt that I held back until he was absent. This was not true. A problem came up. It just happened to happen then and I decided I ought to act on it.

From that point on, Gus was incommunicado. This was the beginning of the deterioration right there. He stopped taking me into his confidence. Soon after, we had a staff meeting, and frankly, I blew up because I didn't even have the authority to change a clerk's shift without first calling Gus. I felt it ought to be within my authority.

Anyway, we had a very violent discussion at which Gus

threatened to make trouble for me. This famous meeting was in December and at this point Gus had not been too friendly with me for about two months. He wasn't unfriendly. He wasn't friendly. He just ignored me, showing disapproval. He gave me things to do, but no communication, no confidences. This was his way of cutting off the candy. "You're not on my team."

The gist of the meeting was that he would not give me the authority to operate. I was angry, but I tried to be tactful. Right out loud, in the presence of the staff at the meeting, I said I thought we were both strong but in different ways. Gus was strong in some ways where perhaps I wasn't so strong, and I was strong in other ways where Gus was not strong. And I said, "If you don't try to get into areas where you're not quite so strong, Gus . . ." That's just the way I put it.

I thought at first that he took this rather well. But almost immediately Gus made a rather violent scene. He made himself look foolish by blowing his stack in front of the employees and insisting I had no authority. Gus even mimicked me.

Immediately after the meeting I reported our blowup to the central office over the phone. Right away the boss saw that I wasn't tied to Gus, and as a matter of fact, that call established a real relationship between us. He now saw I wasn't on Gus' side. I was for him. I didn't realize at the time that my phone call was the first test of my loyalty to the top man who gave me the job, as against my loyalty to Gus as my superior.

I used to think that Gus was a decent guy but he had never liked me to talk to the general manager directly. No wonder. He didn't want to show any quality beneath him. This is another side of him. He didn't like any good quality of his subordinates shown directly to his superior.

Two weeks later the boss called me and said he'd be in to see me the next morning. When he arrived, for the first time he really took me into his confidence. The general manager is very secretive about his problems. He doesn't take people into his confidence easily.

So I had a first indication that he liked the way I operated, and I suppose maybe he liked me as a person. I don't know which it was, *modus operandi* or the fact that I followed his instructions, or what. He said he was very upset with Gus Bass and his bad handling of details and lack of follow-up.

He said, "I want this kept in confidence. I don't know how long I can keep him there because I've got a lot of pressure from other people." He wouldn't mention who those other people were, but I assume they were higher up.

Then he asked me more questions about Gus' competence. I volunteered that the man had been 30 years in the field or longer, and his professional competence was known long before I came into this position. His ability should not be judged just because he's slipping a bit now.

He said, "Well, I'll think about it." I'm not trying to flatter myself, but I kept my mouth shut. I only dropped a hint. I could have said plenty if I had wanted to be that kind of a person. But when the general manager pressed me, I finally said, "Well, I've watched Gus, and now that I've worked with him for two or three months, I think you're right. Gus is no longer capable of handling details. He's not thorough." I think if I had put it even more strongly, he would have moved faster to get Gus out.

The situation between Gus and me deteriorated and kept on deteriorating. As soon as the general manager got the third quarter report, he was on Gus from the word go. He always had a list of complaints for Gus to answer, and sometimes he wouldn't get answers back. Gus' philosophy was, "I have all this nonsense on my mind that he wants answers to, but I'll forget about it and maybe he'll forget about it." Unfortunately he didn't. He kept everything in a little book and when he got an answer, he made note of it. Anyway, a lot of this trivia had accumulated that Gus hadn't followed through on.

The boss was upset about the maintenance reports on the station and the cleaning situation. Also the fact that he had a lot of things hanging unanswered with Gus.

He showed me a list of answers that he hadn't received

and said, "Do you still think that Gus is competent?" I didn't want to attack Gus and I didn't want to defend him, so I gave a double-talk answer. I pointed out, "Gus has brought some pretty excellent experience in here to teach me to run your station. Leave myself out of it, but Lord knows, I don't know how I could have taken over like this if Gus hadn't trained me. I'm not trying to toot my own horn." You see, I wanted to make clear to him that I had already taken over.

A month later the boss was back to tell me that Gus was being demoted. Not in name, but in fact. All authority and all responsibility were being taken away from him and given to me. At this point he looked at me to see my reaction.

I looked him in the eye, and I said, "Well, I can't say I feel extremely elated at seeing Gus pushed aside. Gus is a big man, and this is quite a slap in his face. But I do appreciate the recognition that you have given me here."

"You've earned it," he told me. "Let's go. Let's make this thing work. I want your loyalty. You know what this means."

Now I guess I can write my own ticket with the general manager any time I want to. He wrote a memo to the entire staff saying that Hugh Cotton is responsible for the entire operation from now on.

I don't know where this leaves Gus. It's a bit embarrassing.

Bass says Cotton lacked judgment, wouldn't delegate authority, and was power-mad.

Cotton says Bass was insecure, unwilling to yield authority, and sloppy in his detail work.

Each builds a convincing case of the other man's failures, but what would you do if you were the general manager?

How would you balance Gus Bass' 30 years of valuable experience against his current carelessness? How would you balance Hugh Cotton's ambitious drive and energy against his inexperience?

And if you were Gus Bass, wouldn't your natural in-

clination be to hesitate before yielding authority to a younger man, especially since that would leave you with nothing to do?

Or if you were Hugh Cotton, anxious to make an outstanding record in your first big position, wouldn't you be inclined to tell the big boss that your superior was messing things up despite your best efforts?

If neither of the two men had much free choice in his course of action, then it is possible to conclude that their relationship was set up wrongly from the start. One man had the authority but not the title. The other had the title but would only be given the authority at some unspecified date in the future. One was passing out of the picture, one was moving in.

When I raised this point with both Gus and Hugh in their separate interviews, they couldn't agree on what should have been done. Gus thought he should have been given the title of station manager along with the authority until Hugh Cotton was ready to take over. Hugh felt that he should have been given the authority along with the title right from the beginning, with Gus Bass there only to help him if he needed help.

A case could be made in defense of each of the two men; neither of them were, in fact, total villains. But management had thrown them into a situation which would inevitably bring out their worst.

The original management decision had looked faultless on paper, but it failed to consider two particular human beings. The result was a year of destructive conflict, poor management of the railroad's property, and two bitter men.

When I interviewed them, both looked beaten and weary. I could hardly tell the victor from the vanquished. What a way to run a railroad!

CHAPTER 17

All for a Worthy Cause

You can't escape personal conflicts by running away from the world of business. Judging from the experiences of a veteran executive in the nonprofit field, the same pattern operates there:

The fight for power in nonprofit organizations goes all the way down the line to the cash register. Certainly it is very prevalent in this field; I think more so than in private business. It's a little more startling because it's all for the good cause of helping people in need. Contributors donate money to help other people and they don't always know the behind-the-scenes maneuvering that goes on.

I know what I'm talking about. For quite a number of years I have been executive director of one of the major national health organizations which is devoted to fighting a particular "dread disease," as the headline writers call it. The "dread diseases" are cancer, tuberculosis, polio, heart, muscular dystrophy, birth defects, multiple sclerosis, cystic fibrosis, blood disease, all kinds of anemias, leukemias; they each have a society. If someone wanted to start a new society and there was no disease, I am sure it could be invented.

A few years ago science was beginning to make headway against "our" disease and we were finding it increasingly difficult to evoke large quantities of money. In one sense we were legitimate, but in another sense our organization really no longer had medical legitimacy. Great

progress had been made in the early diagnosis and successful treatment of "our" disease. We should have folded our tents and stolen away in the night. Or we might have done what Basil O'Connor did with the National Foundation, turning it from polio—pretty well conquered—to other diseases which are not conquered. Our association no longer needed to be a national organization with ladies auxiliaries and other local efforts.

So there was a bit of hokiness to this thing to begin with although we were helping poor people, victims of "our" disease. We had a legitimate enterprise. We helped hospitals to do a commendable job in our field because treatment costs were very high. Our services were free; we charged nothing to the patients; and we went out of our way to find victims who could not afford the hospital costs.

Our slogan was, "The helping hand is the noblest hand." But there was nothing very noble about what went on inside our organization. The board of trustees decides where the money goes. As executive director I would go to them and recommend where to allocate our funds for the coming year.

The chairman of our board of trustees was a nationally known clothing manufacturer. Now in the clothing business you don't meet public figures, celebrities, beautiful actresses. You are a nonentity, just a nice guy in the business community. The chairman had unlimited money but no glamour. He wanted adulation and glory and he wanted power. He wanted to mix and mingle with the greats. He wanted the prestige that comes to the national chairman of a national cause.

Through his position he received lots of public attention and lots of power and that's all he wanted. He consorted with the president, the vice-president, supreme court justices. He wasn't philanthropic or socially minded or anything else. The chairman appointed his friends to the board of trustees; also people whose business favor he wanted to curry. All in the name of charity. Many of them were big names and they did contribute money as well as their own wealthy connections.

He had taken on not a nominal responsibility but a real one. It was a burden, and despite his expense account it was an unpaid job. Normally you buy your way onto a board of trustees. Depending on the organization, you may have to pay \$25,000 for a position like this. He was supposed to but he never did. It was awkward. He was personally a very stingy guy. His contributions were limited to buying theatre tickets for his wife's auxiliary benefit or something of that sort. He would travel a great deal on behalf of the organization and instead of picking up the tab himself, he would charge it to the association.

But aside from this pettiness, the chairman worked at the job. He got misery out of it. He got an awful lot of blisters on his brain and sleepless nights. It's really a thankless job and it took a great deal of time, money, and energy out of his business day.

He had inherited an association which was pretty well run-down and he was determined to make "our" disease the best researched illness in the U.S. That is a worthy cause. But his motivation was to make the cure—when the doctors found it—a monument to him. The doctors were completely incidental.

To his credit he would always try to get the best doctors and the best research men in this particular specialty. His ambitions and his drives coincided with something socially desirable. It was a case of ends and means. The end was a good one but the means were to brush aside any individual who got in his way.

This guy succeeded in building the association and our research arm into a wonderful institution, one of the finest of its kind. However, when the disease was finally brought under partial control, interestingly enough, it was a foreign doctor who discovered the treatment, a scientist who had never received funds from our association.

I reported, of course, directly to the chairman. Since this was his first experience with the health field, he leaned heavily on me. For instance I would come to him and raise questions to stimulate his thinking about our long-term future. I might ask him, "Where are we going to be three years from now? What are we going to do with

this association?" And I would get a playback in a most amusing way. At the next trustees' meeting, he would stand up and say, "Gentlemen, what we need is a master blueprint. Where will we be three years from now?"

But don't misunderstand. He was skillful; he had brains. He was articulate. But his failure to contribute money personally was causing increasing resentment on the board.

Finally a group of the trustees moved to replace him. He fought back. He made an appeal to the board. "Gentlemen, this association is my life. If you take away my position, I have nothing left to live for." And by golly if he didn't play on the sympathy of the board of trustees! They reelected him almost unanimously. He proved he could manipulate the trustees. That's how shrewd and clever he was.

In the usual pattern, the executive director controls the board. He is working day and night on the association's problems, while they come in only to attend occasional meetings. He prepares their agenda. He tells them how much money they need to raise. He recommends the kind of campaign the association should conduct and its theme. He comes up with recommendations on the research program for the new year. He creates the case you bring to the public to ask their support.

The trustees are not experts. So in considerable measure they delegate the responsibility to the executive director. And the touchstone is, if he is successful he survives. If you do a job, you have a certain measure of security. I've been in this field since the war and in this particular job for many years now.

In our association the trustees showed a great deal of naiveté. They thought that all you had to do to raise \$10,000,000 or \$20,000,000 was to run a fund drive. I told them they were utterly unrealistic. When the money failed to come in they had to scale down their goals rather drastically.

In any business there is always a reckoning. There comes a day of judgment. Is the money coming in? For

us, it wasn't. I recommended to the trustees that we hire a new fund-raiser to replace the man we had. We needed to find someone who had already been successful in raising funds. That's difficult to do. There aren't many. To succeed in the fund-raising field, one of the prerequisites is to be a "con" man. You have to persuade people to give even if your cause is not as bright and shiny as it might be.

So we began looking. Soon after this I was down in Arizona accompanying the chairman on a speaking date when we learned that one experienced fund-raiser might be available. Completely unplanned, we went to this man's home and very cavalierly the chairman said to him, "Hey, Harry, come and work for me."

Harry said, "No, I'm through with fund-raising. I want nothing more to do with it. I am a respectable businessman." I think he was some kind of a minor vice-president of a small local bank. He went on, "I've made a way of life for myself and my family out here in Arizona. I don't want anything to disturb it."

The chairman said, "Yes, but this job pays \$22,000." Whereupon Harry said, "You s.o.b. You've just lost me a night's sleep because I am going to be turning all night with this thing. Here I have made my way of life and then you come." The short of the story is that he did come and take over the whole fund-raising operation for us.

Harry was a megalomaniac—you know, the sun rose and set around him. He ran very forcibly with the ball. This guy was very capable, to be sure. He did have a social work background. There was some humanity in him but it was subdued by the necessity of raising the buck.

He was a real expert in fund-raising. To be a successful fund-raiser, it is almost a prime requisite that you be impervious to insults and turndowns. As a breed, the fund-raisers are a brash, egocentric, insensitive bunch. You have to keep bludgeoning away. Like the others, Harry was demanding and also very infantile in many respects.

He felt that fund-raising was the all-important thing. The cause was secondary to fund-raising. Health education was secondary to fund-raising. Medical research was

secondary to fund-raising. It's good to have something to do with the money but the main thing is to raise it. He had a great talent for getting you to part with a buck. We were fortunate to find him.

Harry was ingenious with gimmicks. For instance, each year we held an opening-game benefit in cooperation with the local football club. Our association had used this for many years as a money-making device. The football team would give us a big block of tickets free, or at a special price, and we would resell them at a markup. When Harry came onto the scene he immediately raised the price of the tickets and as a result doubled the amount of money that came to our association.

Harry's unique fingerprint upon the fund-raising field was a highly developed direct mail solicitation. Where other fund-raisers would say, "Send \$50 or \$100 and become a sponsor," Harry sought many small contributions. He translated it into terms of "\$5 buys enough medicine for so many kids." Suffice to say that he had developed a very special way of making the appeal. He humanized it.

The normal range of response to a direct mail campaign these days is about 2 percent; that would be a good result. I forget what our earlier responses were, but I'm sure they were less than 1 percent. Harry pulled a very high response from direct mail at the beginning, 3, 4, and 5 percent. Many people would make small contributions to our association. That's all he asked for: \$5.00 or \$10.00.

But once you made a contribution you were placed on our IBM list. We finally wound up with a list of two or three million names. He arranged special mailings four or five times in the course of a year: Easter, summer vacation, Thanksgiving, Christmas, even St. Valentine's Day. The same people would be solicited over and over. You would make a contribution thinking it was an annual gift and then you would get a bill again. You probably didn't keep specific track anyway, so you might wind up making two or three contributions in the course of a year.

When Harry sent out two or three million pieces of

mail, he would want a big story to hit in the newspapers so that there would be some readiness and receptiveness for the appeal. But the story was not always there so he would dragoon the medical director or the research director to come out with a statement announcing progress against "our" disease. He wanted them to announce some startling development, or at least a human interest story of ■ child saved from suffering by our research grants.

This they were reluctant to do and in many cases there was ■ knockdown, drag-out fight. The medical people didn't want to make any claims unless they were justified, nor did they want to make any statements in the newspapers until such time as they had already made their reports to their professional societies. Harry pushed them and needled them. He was a strong and dominating guy so you would find yourself trying to accede even though you didn't want to go along.

The first man to get in Harry's way was the public relations man. Thanksgiving came around and Harry had three million pieces of mail about to go out. "Get a story," he told him. So the public relations man looked around. He went to the medical director and the doctor said, "I don't have anything." He went to the research director and he said, "I'm not ready to report." He went to the rehabilitation director; same results.

Finally he came back to Harry and said, "Harry, there is no story." Harry said, "I know. If I had a story, I wouldn't need you. I would pick up the phone and call the Associated Press, and it would be on the news wire. I need you because there is no story." Harry went over my head to the chairman and within ■ week the P.R. man was fired.

Putting it simply, he didn't contribute to fund-raising. In the nonprofit field your success or failure depends on your ability to raise money. If you are not directly in the line of raising money, you can be dispensed with. Like the P.R. man, and as I feared, like me.

On another and earlier occasion Harry and I went to see a magazine editor about a story. This same public relations

man had arranged our meeting. We wanted some publicity so we could reprint it and enclose the article in our fund-raising appeal. It makes for more dough. Harry told the editor of a wondrous thing that had happened to a child as a result of our work. Then he added that this two-year-old kid could now tie his shoelace because of our special program. Afterwards I looked at him, and as though he read my mind, he said, "Yes, Arnold, but it *could* have happened." In other words, he wasn't above anything if it would help to raise money. All these shenanigans, some of them ethical, some of them not so ethical, all for a worthy cause!

Another technique we use is the big testimonial dinner. I would get a guy who had some leverage in a particular field, whether it be dry goods or drugs or printing or real estate, or what have you. He becomes the patsy, so to speak, around whom a big dinner is built. He gets all his friends and his suppliers and hopefully we raise anywhere from \$50,000 to \$200,000 from such a fund-raising dinner. The amount depends on the man's stature.

The fund-raiser stays in the background. He has done all the preparation. He has brought the potential donor together with the guy who can extract the donation. And generally he has a passion for anonymity. I stayed in the shadows.

But Harry had a passion for exposure, mostly of himself. At one dinner in New York, a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff was the guest of honor. The Vice President of the United States was there. Harry arranged for a picture to be taken of himself sandwiched between the vice-president and a member of the cabinet. This was totally improper. I insisted he should remain inconspicuous. But unknown to me, he told the hotel captain to put an extra place setting on the main dais for himself and he sat down among the honored guests.

He wanted glory out of it, ego satisfaction. Never in a million years could he have found this in a bank job. Here he was consorting with the nation's leaders instead of being the Handy Andy man which is all he really was.

After the dinner was over and the guests had left, we tangled bitterly over this. I reminded him I was executive director in charge of the whole association while he was only the fund-raiser. His answer was that I was a mere administrator; that *he* had the important job. I knew then he would try to brush me aside when the time came. I had gotten in his way.

One footnote to this man: he hired a staff of fund-raisers throughout the country, and he drove them mercilessly. He made them feel constantly insecure. He set high quotas for them and he offered small bonuses to give them that little additional incentive. As soon as they took their production level, that is, money, to a higher plateau, he would hold them accountable for that higher amount next year. He would ante it up; raise the quota all the time. And it worked.

The medical director was another man who got in Harry's way. I might add that this doctor had become so skilled in his specialty that several public health services were tapping his brains as a consultant. He would visit them in the summertime and help them with their particular problems. He had achieved a national reputation and when he returned to our research center he was feeling his oats. He was getting too big for Harry.

This isn't a rare thing at all. You always have these kinds of conflicts. But it came to such a point that our association became too small for the two of them. Harry was always insecure when it came to anybody else running the show. He contrived to provoke the doctor until the man could take Harry no longer.

So you had these two men locking horns and finally the doctor came to a board of trustees meeting with his resignation in hand. Never thinking that the board would dispense with his services, the doctor said to the trustees, "This place is not big enough for the two of us. One of us will have to leave."

So they said, "Goodbye, doctor." As he left the room he yelled over his shoulder to the board, "This is the triumph of the dollar over medicine!" The trustees' attitude was

that you can always get a doctor but you can't always find a man who will raise two or three million dollars.

Harry now had two down, the public relations man and the medical director.

He now began to push me and the doctors around. He wouldn't interfere with specific medical cases but he would set a tone. And it was very intrusive. For example, all the mail would come to his desk, including the medical director's mail. He had given himself the option of opening it or not opening it.

He meddled and dictated to the rehabilitation director; to the research director. Everybody complained that he wouldn't let them run the show as they professionally sought to run it. He was always interfering. It was my responsibility to recommend allocations of funds. But since he was producing the funds, he convinced the board that department heads should come to him for appropriations so that he could evaluate them "in terms of fund-raising," whatever that meant. So, in effect, he was making medical decisions. He was unqualified to do so. He was exploiting his power.

And just an indication of his adroitness as a "con" man: His projection of "future plans" and "unfolding programs" and "the importance of new concentrations of effort" and so forth was so impressive that on one occasion when the board of trustees was going to the bank to borrow money to tide us over until contributions picked up, he asked for a \$3,000 raise—and got it. He told them, "Gentlemen, the projection for next year is that we will raise \$3,500,000. To accomplish this, we will need to allocate a larger operating budget." And he wrote his own raise into the budget. The trustees approved it without asking me.

No doubt about his ability. He had been very imaginative in other areas. For example, before he joined us he had built a substantial endowment for a local university. But he pushed around the president of the university and finally they had to get rid of him there. Everywhere he went it was the same thing. He was jockeying for power and the Number One post.

It was obvious I would be the next to go. From day to day I was gradually losing control of the operation to him. He had strong support from the trustees. He was raising the money; I was spending it. The trustees, at the time they allowed the medical director to resign, made it clear which they thought was more important.

Just when I could feel the ax about to fall on my neck, an unexpected development occurred. Harry overreached himself. There was a revolt; actually it was a strike. It had come to the point where the medical board refused to work with him any longer. They refused to allow him to tamper with their mail or to allow their mail to come to him. They refused to distort or exaggerate information for publicity.

They brought their complaints to the board of trustees and this time it was not comparable to the incident that I mentioned earlier. It was a confrontation of the medical and professional staff versus this fund-raiser. The board was faced with a full-scale mutiny. They settled out of court, so to speak, and made an arrangement to have Harry depart from the scene with a fantastic two-year severance contract. It was arranged so that if the books of the association were published, it would appear that he was being paid a consultant's fee of \$15,000 a year from our association, plus another \$15,000 a year from our research arm. The agreement was good for \$30,000 a year for two years.

Then the trustees turned to me and asked me to rebuild the staff and to find a new fund-raiser. I assure you, it was totally unexpected. And as you know, I'm still executive director and very much in command of the whole picture today.

You asked me what lessons I've learned from this experience. There are, I think, three.

The first is that you don't escape personal fighting by going into the nonprofit field. The battle I've just described must have been as nasty and vicious as anything that happens in private business.

The second is that you attract a different type of person

from the kind you get in private business. Here you get the man who wants glory and fame and prestige. There isn't much of that in corporations—only money. Some of these nonprofit fellows are megalomaniacs. Their motives are no purer than those of a door-to-door vacuum cleaner salesman.

The third is that your career depends on more than your talent or your ability to handle people. It depends on the importance of the work you do. In other words, in the money-raising business you've got to be a money-raiser or you don't count. I couldn't handle Harry but even if I could have, would it have made any difference as between his importance and mine to the board of trustees? Isn't this true of corporations too?

Despite these behind-the-scenes experiences, I don't want to give you the impression that most charities don't deserve support. I have contributed out of my own pocket to some of the charities for whom I worked even though I knew a great deal of it was siphoned off wastefully. I think it is a good rule to give only to a charity that the staff people themselves believe in and give to. There are a lot of good causes around and institutions that really deserve help. It's all tax-deductible anyway; that's the motivation to begin with. If there were no tax deduction, you would have no charities. That's why Congress wrote the tax laws as they did. The laws produced an \$11,000,000,000 industry and jobs for people like Harry and me.

CHAPTER 18

Naval Maneuvers

THE military executive, the commanding officer, contends with the same problems as his civilian friend in the dark worsted suit. It isn't enough to be prepared for instant battle with the enemies of the United States; he must equally be ready to cope with his boss, his own commander.

The forms and procedures for career advancement in the military services are, of course, different from those in the large private corporation. But they are not as different as you might expect. Rules for promotion there are, but the rules are interpreted by men; more specifically, by your commanding officer. If you want to move ahead in the military service, an expert's advice is to do your job, wear freshly pressed pants, maybe marry a service wife, and make sure the boss is in your corner.

This is the message of a commander in the United States Naval Reserve who described the special techniques used by high-ranking Navy officers to win advancement:

I command a U.S. Naval Reserve PP unit, a patrol plane squadron, which is an aggregation of officers and enlisted men who fly multiengined planes assigned to coastal patrol.

Our *raison d'etre* is training. We have the job of maintaining a mobilization readiness as close to 100 percent as possible. Our squadron is in a ready-to-go situation al-

ways. We also have operational functions which are used to enhance the training.

For instance, coastal patrol squadrons have the function of ASW, antisubmarine warfare. Take the East Coast, because it is the key area. The PP squadrons all up and down the coast have the function of taking over from the fleet on weekends. My PP squadron flies one weekend a month plus two weeks a year.

Our plane at the moment is the P-2, an antisubmarine aircraft which carries nine men. Basically it's an electronics platform. It carries radar, ECM—that's electronic countermeasures—and MAG gear. That's magnetic anomaly detector, a long tail boom that extends from the rear of the aircraft as a sort of stinger. It can, by analysis of the earth's magnetic field, determine if there is a magnetic anomaly; in other words, if there is a mass of metal on the bottom of the ocean floor.

We are flying airplanes that are worth an awful lot of money. I imagine a reserve plane like ours with all its electronic gear is probably worth a quarter of a million dollars. We sharpen skills by flying what amount to war-time missions in peacetime, and we're getting some mileage out of it.

All along the East Coast we are thoroughly familiar with the Russian fishing fleet which has drifted down from the Northern Banks. We maintain aviation surveillance on them; part of the Cold War game. Our aircraft on patrol make "nine point photography" of the Soviet fishing vessels. "Nine point" means from forward, from the stern, from each quarter. When our planes bring back the photos, we can then study the radar array. We can identify the kind of electronic equipment they are using off our shore. This gives us a tip on what they are looking for. We fly so frequently over these people that we not only know the ships; our photography is so clear that we can even identify the people on those ships.

I am basically a civilian despite 22 years in the naval reserve. I am a commanding officer in the U.S. Naval Reserve. During World War II, I spent three years on

active duty and I stayed in the reserve after the war. In 1946 I came out as a j.g. [lieutenant, junior grade] and then moved up in the usual way, lieutenant, lieutenant commander until 1956. Normally you serve about five years in grade before you have a chance for promotion. I moved up a little faster. They promoted me to commander in '60 so I was a really young commander. This year I move into the zone for captain.

At this level anybody's chances for promotion in the reserves are roughly 8 percent, statistically speaking. The chances of my making rear admiral are surprisingly good. I'm young, 44. I have a lot to offer the navy, a lot of good years in me, and a lot of good management experience. The problem is that there are only a handful of reserve admirals. Most people retire from the reserves before they ever get to this stage.

My job as a squadron commander is to see to it that my people are trained and fully operational. I have several hundred men. I have 30 pilots as well as enlisted crewmen, radar operators, radio operators, DCM operators. The rest are ground support people. And I'm the boss. My job is to see that my squadron flies a required number of hours per weekend and per year and that we do more than bore holes in the air.

My career as a naval officer depends very much on the job I do with this squadron. I am responsible to the navy for everything my people do. This is the name of the game. This is the way the navy works. The officer is the guy whose neck is out and who is responsible.

As commanding officer I have done a pretty good job. I have been a good pilot. I've always had the maximum number of hours. I've been militarily correct and my uniform looks good. This is very important. It's one of the bases of judgment of an officer. The reason for the freshly pressed pants is that an officer has a great influence on the enlisted men and junior officers who see him. If they are not crisply military, their discipline slacks off.

People don't react to command as quickly when they have a relaxed approach to things. I'll give you an exam-

ple: I remember one of the other squadrons that prided itself on its air of relaxation. The officer, for instance, wore loafers instead of flight shoes. Relaxation was their trademark. As a result several things happened. The enlisted men got a little too comfortable with the officers. They all dressed alike in ■ sense. You stopped having officers and enlisted men.

And then they had an aircraft accident. In this particular case the navigator had just walked through the aircraft. When you come in for a landing you're required to fasten your seat belt and shoulder harness. One of the enlisted men had his belt and his shoulder straps loose. The navigator said, "You'd better tighten your shoulder harness." The guy answered, "Oh, sure," but he didn't. The gear man forgot to lower his gear and the pilot in command of the aircraft made a wheels-up landing. When the plane came in for that very abrupt stop with its wheels up, the enlisted man pitched into the bulkhead, smashed his nose, lost four teeth, and broke his shoulder. This is part of the same laxity, you see.

The C.O., a lieutenant commander, was hauled before the long green table and asked why it happened. But I knew it all began with the loafers and the unpressed pants. Don't laugh. An executive in private business would also be hurt by unpressed pants. You know that. The navy is no different.

The key to your career in the navy is this blue piece of paper I have here, your fitness report as an officer. "Navpers 937" for reservists. Everybody knows form 937. It asks 25 long and detailed questions about you, which your senior officer fills out every single year.

I know the whole history of my own fitness reports. An officer has a right to look at his own whenever he's in Washington. These are confidential, but not to him. He can go to the Pentagon and review them at any time. I have done that.

I have always had good fitness reports. The only negatives were apparently forgiven because of my youth. As a young ensign and j.g., I was a brash and outspoken young

officer. My C.O. said just this. As a matter of fact one skipper characterized me as cocky and snotty. He used those words. But at the same time he said, "With a little seasoning and a few years, he will make a fine officer. He's just got to get the rough edges rubbed off. Let's retain this officer. We need someone with his energy and his ability." While he criticized me, I was fortunate that he apparently also saw my potential.

Let me show you a fitness report. This is the nub of the whole navy system. If a man gets a bad fitness report, to all intents and purposes his career is shot down. The result is that many officers in the naval service live by the rules, don't make waves, don't rock the boat. Because then you're carried along as a pretty good fellow. Louse up just once and you get a black mark on your 937 and it's on your record forever. Things are never expunged. You've had it.

Let me show you what to look for. This is a reserve fitness report; it's quite similar to the active duty fitness report. It asks a commanding officer to evaluate a junior officer by a series of check marks. Question 18 is the key one.

It has five boxes from left to right. The highest rating is at the left. Check that box and you are saying the officer is "outstanding and highly qualified." The next lower rating to the right means "excellent." The box in the middle says "competent and efficient." If you said that a man in civilian life was competent and efficient, this would be pretty good. But now that's a stock phrase in the navy and it doesn't count anymore. That's only midway and that's about the lowest you can mark him and let him hope for promotion.

Number Four out of the five says, "Satisfactory. Needs some supervision." Below that is the lowest, "Inadequate. Not qualified." That is considered an adverse report and if you mark a man in that section you must show him the fitness report and give him a chance to answer it.

937 is a thoughtful attempt to evaluate officers objectively. If an officer has done a good job, I know damn few

C.O.'s who won't say so. I think it's basically a good system. It has withstood the test of time. I am always impressed by the fact that, by and large, the high officers I have met are pretty sharp people. They are good men. They'd be good management people on the outside. I am always a little concerned, however, about those who got lost along the way and who might have been pretty good too.

Because how does a reporting officer decide whether you've done a good job? Therein lies the problem. There are no job descriptions for naval officers. I suppose it's a tradition going back to *Old Ironsides*. So your rating unfortunately depends frequently on a gut feeling of the C.O., which is why it is such a subjective thing. Too many men's careers are damaged arbitrarily by a C.O.

For example, just the way you have hard-sell people or soft-sell people in business, you have high graders and low graders in the navy. Perfectionists, for instance, who set very high standards that no one can match. Or you have the other side. You have the C.O. who overrates everybody. Just as damaging.

I had one. I had a C.O. who said, "All of my officers are outstanding. I want them all promoted." Consequently, he marked all 15 officers in the unit as outstanding, including me. What happens to the man who is really outstanding? This is the problem. When a selection board sees an officer checked as outstanding, it looks at the second row of boxes. "How many officers of his grade have you designated as outstanding?" If he has written, "15 others," well, his rating doesn't carry much weight. The navy feeling is that an outstanding officer is really one in one hundred.

The 937 thus has its own built-in check against a general rating bias, up or down. But you have little or no protection if you don't get along with the boss or even if you somehow make him feel threatened. I personally knew another C.O., a lawyer on the outside, who characteristically downgraded any officer whom he resented.

He gave bad fitness reports to his executive officers, his Number Two men. What he did was the easiest trick in

the fitness report business. He gave them faint praise. He just checked the middle box instead of the ones to the left. "Competent and efficient." That wasn't good enough, so one of the men left the reserve program and soon became president of a very important and successful company. He's an outstanding manager, motivator, administrator. And he's running a profitable business, which is evidence of capability that I am sure would have shown in the navy.

The C.O. used exactly the same trick on the other officer. So that officer was passed over for promotion. But he received a waiver and he was permitted to stay in the navy despite being twice passed over—TPO'd, as we say.

The same thing happened to Admiral Rickover. Rickover, of course, was fighting high-level politics and besides that, he was a Jew. Anti-Semitism has been a problem running all through the navy. The navy has come a long way but there are still anti-Semites. They use the same method on a Jew: damning with faint praise. They will never come right out and say, "This man is no good." He is good; he's proved it; but he is not good enough. That's it. Put him in less than two blocks on the left side of 937. That's all it takes.

Normally the officer doesn't know about it until after it's happened. It is very simple to do. A C.O. doesn't have to show a fitness report to anyone except a man receiving an adverse report. He's always protected in this personal relationship. The only way the officer will know is if he gets a chance to go to Washington and look at his jacket. But the damage has been done by that time.

By the time a navy officer has reached high rank, superior fitness reports aren't enough. I'll tell you why. There are now 125 captains on duty out of 750 men who were in the Academy graduating class of 1943. Last year these captains received what is called either the long letter or the short letter. The long letter was three pages. It said, "Dear Captain, You have done a marvelous job and the navy thanks you." Or words to that effect. The last paragraph on page three said, in effect, "Unfortunately,

you've had it." The short letter was just three or four paragraphs long, and it said, "The navy department is pleased to announce that you have been selected for retention."

Those 50 who got the short letter now know that they are in the running for rear admiral. But you have to realize that we are overofficered. The major ships—the cruisers and the carriers—will have captains. But there are no longer that many capital ships. The deep draft commands go to captains. But there are far more captains than there are deep-draft commands. Most ships in the navy today are small enough to be commanded by lower ranking officers. A destroyer, for instance, gets a lieutenant commander. A frigate might have a commander.

So quite a bit of conniving is done. You try to get close to everybody who could be useful to you, and you never know who can be useful to you. The navy doesn't announce who is on its selection boards. Nevertheless there are a lot of people in the navy who can do you a lot of good. There are people who can write letters of commendation for your record. There are people who can talk to other people, admirals or civilians highly placed in the navy.

If you're on a friendly basis with someone you have gotten to know over the years, you might ask him to write a letter on your behalf. It's the sort of thing that happens over a golf game or a poker hand or a bridge table or maybe after a dinner party. The admiral might say, "George, you're going to be coming up pretty soon, and anything I can do to help you, let me know." Then the junior officer says, "Well, Admiral, a letter next month will be just about what I need."

Or you can wrangle for the right job. Every rank and every specialty designation has an officer at a desk in the Pentagon whose job it is to pass out the billets. And it behooves any officer on active duty to get to this guy—get to know him and to press for a good assignment. He does it by picking up the phone and calling him. Every officer makes a point of dropping in on him in Washington. This

is why every senior officer wants a little time in Washington.

There are career patterns. A captain who commands a heavy attack wing would know it would behoove him to get to the Naval War College because he needs it on his record. Nobody will make flag rank without War College. He can request it but he must do a selling job on his superiors.

He frequently does it on a personal basis. You go to your next senior, the man who has to approve your request. You say, "I've got to get to the War College next year." If the commander stands in well with that captain, the captain will do what he can to enhance his chances. He'll see that he does get to the War College.

For every request that a junior officer makes to a senior officer, there must be a written endorsement by that senior officer. Here again the damning with faint praise can be done easily. If a captain says simply, "Forwarded, recommending approval," forget it. His hands are clean; he has forwarded it favorably. But if he says, "Forwarded, strongly recommending approval. This man is an outstanding citizen," then we're going someplace, you see.

There's a lot less cultivation of personal relationships in the officers' clubs than you might think. The cultivation is done in private, such as at bridge parties. The opportunity to make a good impression on a senior exists in a thousand ways. Maybe you can make a better martini than anyone else. If your C.O. happens to be a lush who likes gin, maybe this helps. In 99 percent of the cases I don't think the relationship is that shallow, but at least this puts you closer to the man. It gives you a chance to see what he's looking for. Maybe you catch him a little off-guard when he's off duty and he tells you what's on his mind. You get closer to him. But you always address a senior by rank, even in your own home. This is my relationship with the commanding officer at our naval station. I always call him "Captain," but I call his wife "Jane."

And when you need a letter of recommendation you

hope the captain you entertained in your home will think kindly of you.

Let's face it. There are wheelers and dealers in the navy as there are anyplace. And some are consummately effective. Let me mention Captain Jim Corcoran. He began in World War II in the flight training program and he emerged as a naval aviator. He fought a pretty good war. I don't think he did anything overtly outstanding but he was good with a squadron.

After the war he decided to go regular. He was an articulate, crisply military man. He married well. He married a good navy wife, a girl who came from a navy family. This is a strong plus. She's navy. The navy is one of the tightest clubs in the world. So the commanding officer would know the man's wife and be favorably impressed by a navy wife. Because, who knows, she might even be able to enhance *his* career. Her father might be an admiral, or they might be friends of friends. The C.O. knows she will make home life much easier for a naval officer. She won't complain when he must be away six months of the year. She'll pick up and move at any moment without a grumble.

I might add that a couple of years ago there was an attempt to write fitness reports for officers' wives. This was to bring the navy into line with industry's custom of interviewing the wife before her husband got an executive job. It was even tried briefly but there was a loud scream and it got shot down pretty fast.

Well, Captain Corcoran right from the beginning used personal relationships and his navy wife to advance his career. He built bridges to people in high places. Here's a man who minded the main chance all the way. He developed his contacts and he tried to get them to write good reports saying that he was invaluable to his country and to the navy.

He was shrewd enough to see where the future lay for naval aviation. He spotted it as being the heavy attack squadrons. He said, "This is the place for me." He got himself a job as a heavy attack C.O. This is not hard for a

bright young officer. He's a good manager and a good aviator and he knew the right people. It remained for him to get enough of the right people to send enough letters and to make enough phone calls. At meetings at the officers' club, he'd say to his superiors, "I'd like that job. When a billet comes up, put me there because I think I can do a job." He got there. He made it.

An old navy rule says there are three things you don't talk about in a wardroom. You don't talk politics, religion, or women. They talk about women an awful lot in the wardroom but the officers rarely talk politics or religion among themselves.

The navy is made up of people just like the civilian world. These are strongly patriotic people but they aren't always so hep. Maybe the navy has a few more John Birchers in it by percentages. I think there is sometimes a hardening of the mental arteries in the military mind. They tend to have strong prejudices in certain directions and a lot of them are ripe for the far right. I have seen some strong arguments.

I've seen some young, liberal officers tangle with other officers. Once a senior staff officer came to our station and gave us a talk to the effect that the function of naval reservists was to fight the left wing and the communists at every turn. He gave us some fairly silly stereotypes. They were the witch-hunt stereotypes, look-under-the-bed sort of thing. And a young officer said, "I thought we were through with all that garbage. You must be out of your mind. That's not what I'm fighting for." He was a young lieutenant.

The staff officer turned to me and said, "I want that officer's name and file number." Later I got to him and I said, "I won't give you his name and number for anything. It's none of your business." He could have gone over my head but he didn't. The guy was using his staff position to sell us his viewpoint but there was nothing that said we had to buy it. These gung-ho far righters don't have control.

On the other side, I have never, of course, heard an

officer express sympathy with the Viet Cong. I don't know of a naval officer who doesn't agree with our treatment of the V.C. On the other hand, I have heard complaints from naval officers that we should have gone much further and much faster. That's a safe position to take, even though it's critical of the government.

If a man were critical on the other side, he would be shot down if his commander wrote on his fitness report, "This officer is not as dedicated as he should be." That might mean that he's too liberal.

I certainly don't think the navy is perfect as far as handling officers is concerned but I love the navy. I have joined only two things in my life: the Episcopal church and the United States Navy. I'm only so-so on the Episcopal church but I am very strong on the navy.

CHAPTER 19

Gentlemen and Scholars

THE story of this book is the story of men struggling to hold their jobs. By their own admissions their defenses are primarily motivated by the terrible fear of loss of their livelihoods.

But in actual fact is this their real motivation? To search for an answer, I interviewed a professor who is chairman of the department of history at a state university. His own employment is guaranteed for life by the university, as is the tenure of his colleagues who have completed a required number of years of service.

In such an environment, where everyone is totally secure, does political infighting diminish or disappear? Are men free to devote their fullest energies to constructive work, to scholarship and teaching?

The professor's interview answers the question:

The average professor is really not less competitive than the average corporation executive. He is simply much less open in his competitiveness. I think professors are, by and large, more afraid, more frustrated, more inhibited. Most of them are not interested in, nor do they care about, the outside world. I don't think most of them would get along at all in business. I have never heard people in the academic field say that they would rather be out in the business world even if they could earn the same amount of money.

They are consciously or unconsciously retreating from

cutthroat competition where the stakes are all or nothing. Not just whether you are an associate professor or a full professor but whether you become vice-president or find yourself out in the cold. Our teachers have more or less opted for job security at the expense of opportunity to get ahead financially. They are scared that they might be booted out if they were in the business world, but of course here in the university they are in no danger of being fired.

In this state you get tenure automatically after four consecutive years of regular full-time appointment. If you are reappointed for a fifth year, the law says you now have tenure.

Once you get tenure you almost literally have to get caught in a public performance of an indecent act to get fired. Other colleges have more or less the same system. It's seven years at Harvard. But once you have tenure you actually can't be dismissed without formal charges and a public hearing before the board of trustees. It has rarely happened.

I don't recall any instructor who was fired for personality reasons. I remember some who were really peculiar; some who were emotionally disturbed; some who were probably incompetent; but they didn't lose their posts. Oh yes, I remember one who was fired for alcoholism. He would often come to class drunk.

Four or five years ago one of our assistant professors committed suicide. I think he probably had sexual and marital difficulties because some of his students had complained to me that he inquired into their sexual lives and made what they felt to be rather offensive remarks in class. But I could do nothing; he had tenure. One night he simply swam out in the lake beyond his depth and they found his body the next morning. Suicide ended his career, not dismissal, because he had tenure.

This business of tenure has affected our whole department. About eight years ago, all of a sudden we started to expand and we took in a lot of young people between 25 and 35. And now these people have tenure and they have acquired the voting majority in our department.

About three years ago they organized a tight little voting block. They wanted to win promotions and better teaching schedules. They would decide in advance how they were going to vote. Their strategy was, "Instead of fragmenting our votes, let's all get behind Professor Smith," which they did and Professor Smith won a majority vote although by a very small margin. The president immediately objected to Professor Smith on two very solid grounds. He was within two years of compulsory retirement and the president felt we needed more continuity of leadership. And secondly, the professor was absolutely inexperienced in administration. It was then that the president stepped in and made his counterrecommendation on my behalf. With the approval of the trustees I was installed by the president as chairman of this department.

I should explain that in higher education, and particularly in huge factories like our university, administration has become business management. For all the lip service paid to scholarship, it takes managerial skill and very little more to keep the machinery running. Our department includes 103 teachers at latest count. It takes management skill just to keep them out of each other's way, to say nothing of all the problems of scheduling and promotion and hiring. Full-time administrative management is totally foreign to what, even 25 years ago, was considered the proper qualification for a chairman. Formerly the requisite was scholarly attainment. But your so-called scholar just doesn't have any interest in this kind of thing and besides, he considers it beneath him.

The only difference to me between the academic world and the business world is that there is probably a little more disguise on the campus. The people in the academic profession like to kid themselves that they are not in a competitive political situation. But they are, and more and more they are coming to realize that they are. The academic field has become big business with all its attendant frictions including, of course, collective bargaining, jockeying for position, and all the rest.

It's a seller's market for teachers in the universities and colleges. We are actually finding it very difficult to fill the

jobs we have. The college student population is expanding faster than the production of Ph.D.'s, which a teacher needs to receive a regular appointment. The young fellows today are conscious of having something to sell. With their new sense of economic leverage, they are a new breed which I find very hard to adjust to. In my day you felt you were pretty lucky if you could get a teaching job at all.

I think these young teachers, and I suppose really all of our teachers, have a superior attitude. Their pose of superiority shows, for instance, in the selection of curriculum. We are confronted with two very different aims. One is to improve the curriculum so as to train better educated people. The other is to reduce the teaching load and make the hours more convenient for the instructors. These make for head-on collision. If you frankly propose something to improve teaching conditions, they will say, "No, that's not our main concern. We are educators." But if, on the other hand, you turn around and say, "This is the ideal educational curriculum but it will mean that most of you will be here for several hours a week longer," they will suddenly discover all sorts of educational reasons why it shouldn't be done.

If I assign certain staff members to teach a section of "Introduction to European History," they will come in and say, "I realize that introductory courses must be taught. But I don't like to teach them and it is not in the interests of the student to be taught an introductory course by someone who doesn't like to teach it."

The same false superiority even affects the amount of homework your son gets. I have one member of my department who has been an assistant professor for 15 or 20 years; who will probably never be promoted; and who, God knows, has never done anything to deserve promotion. She doesn't like students; they don't like her. She is a soured old-maid type who takes out her frustrations on students by continually demanding more and more outside reading. From what they tell me, and I think this is quite true, she tries to run her undergraduate courses as if they were Ph.D. courses.

She thinks this is a sign of her scholarly attainments although she has none. She will require the students to read a dozen or 15 difficult books of which there is one copy each in the college library. When I bring this to her attention she will say, "Obviously you are not interested in scholarship. You are interested only in passing students through as easily as possible."

Actually, there isn't very much I can do short of intervening and changing her grades. But a conscientious chairman, as I try to be, would feel very reluctant to say that a particular student should have gotten a B rather than a C. So she gets away with it because we have no real check on her. The only check comes when she is up for promotion. Then she is observed in class a number of times and the observers file written reports.

These observers, however, are inclined to be very gentle about what they say because of the chance that, in one way or another, their reports will get back to the observee. It's extremely hard to keep secrets. A department committee as well as the dean and the president have access to these reports. So for all their so-called confidential character some seven or eight people have access to them. But these seven or eight people are rotating. Some of them are elected and you can't be certain that maybe two or three years later the observee may not be in a position to see these reports and to take it out in return.

Plus the fact that in any bureaucracy the general attitude is to give the underling the benefit of the doubt. Because after all, I have nothing to lose by it. If he gets promoted, it isn't interfering with me in any way; it's not costing me anything. I am not directly competing with him. And so you go easy. Instead of saying he's lousy, you say there were certain weaknesses. "Perhaps he was nervous because he was under observation." So a lot of teachers get promoted when they shouldn't.

Professional considerations mean a great deal, but this depends on what your superiors choose to call professional at a given time. Your department head may only count the pages of what you have published in learned journals. If you publish a lot of articles in a lot of magazines or

write a few books, your colleagues will refer to this as objective evidence of your scholarship. Never mind the merit, if any, of your articles. The important thing is that you got them into print.

For a while promotion was regarded as something you were not supposed to be interested in. About 20 years ago when the annual promotional meetings came along, someone rather surreptitiously would slip into each teacher's mailbox a little *curriculum vitae*, a résumé. Even this was not quite considered good form because you weren't supposed to be interested. But times have changed. Today, as chairman, I solicit from every teacher eligible for promotion all the information he wants to give. I collect it all and publish it in a mimeographed document which is circulated among the voters. It removes the stigma of bucking and gouging. Even here there is a pose among a few people who won't file application for promotion. They make a little notation on this document, "No information supplied." This gives them a kind of cachet among their little group. It shows that they are above that sort of thing; that they are really scholars.

A few years ago a colleague of mine was one of this type. This character had been on the outs with the administration for some time and he wasn't getting promoted. Then he published two fairly scholarly books in close succession to each other. Although he had been attacking me viciously for years, I decided I would like to get this guy promoted anyway. But of course there was all the machinery. He would have to be observed twice by three colleagues and he would have to fill out an extensive form giving his whole life history.

But he's a very odd character who prides himself on his scholarly attainments and professes to despise all the usual methods of getting ahead. So he said, "No, I refuse to have anything to do with this." He wanted to be promoted but he wouldn't have anything to do with the necessary formalities. So I filled out the forms for him, went to bat for him in the university committee that has jurisdiction over these things, and put in enough of a plug for him

to get promoted in spite of himself. Of course he never thanked me for this; he's a catty and in-between sex type anyway.

Last semester I gave him a teaching assignment I thought he would like. He promptly accused me of doing this as part of a pattern of persecution which he had learned to recognize before. He said this was aimed at him because he was on the outs with the administration.

I wrote him back saying that I was sorry; that I hadn't known he wouldn't like this program, and therefore I would now change it to give him what he did like. But meanwhile I protested very strenuously against his accusations. I said I happened to know, whether or not he realized it, that he wouldn't have received his promotion if it hadn't been for my strenuous efforts on his behalf. So he wrote back; we had quite an exchange of letters. He said he felt sure that I had been forced into a position of having to get him promoted; otherwise it would have been too painfully obvious that he was being persecuted.

Finally I had words with him. It was in my home. Partly because of our earlier friendship I leaned over backwards to try to reach an understanding with him. He began with a recital of what he conceived to be his grievances and the ways in which he felt he had been persecuted. In reply I tried to explain what seemed to me to be the facts of life. I never got more than half a sentence finished before he would break in. Finally I just said, "I'm not even going to try anymore since you are not interested in what I have to say. There is no point in our having any further conversations."

From that moment on, we were not exactly friendly. He joined a little group that in the next six or eight months circulated mimeographed letters addressed "Dear colleague," making all sorts of wild charges. They said that the administrators, and this is a dirty word among "scholars," should not decide matters of curriculum. This of course was aimed at me despite the fact that up until a few years ago I was purely a teacher and not an administrator. Their strategy was to generate an atmosphere of

suspicion toward the administration and toward me. Some of their statements were out-and-out fabrications.

So I went to the president to see if he could do anything to stop these wild and irresponsible charges. But he told me, "There is nothing you can do unless they commit some flagrant act unbecoming to scholars and gentlemen. Only then can you bring charges." I said, "Mr. President, some of us feel that it has already gone that far." But he said no; he was experienced with the board of trustees who would hear these charges. His advice to me was, "Wait it out. You are going to be reelected chairman and if you are not, I will reappoint you anyway. These professors will finally tire of the whole thing." Which they did.

In our university we have really an anomalous sort of democracy, because while outwardly we have democratic procedures, the by-laws say that if the president doesn't like the outcome of an election, he can in effect set it aside.

You know how politics operates in any organization. You just get the word passed around by friends and partisans. When I first came here one of my more objectionable and older colleagues who didn't realize I hadn't a vote came to me shortly before an election and said, "I'm Professor Lynch's campaign manager." As soon as I explained I didn't yet have tenure and couldn't vote he lost interest in me. Ordinarily there's no such thing as a formal campaign manager but informally, of course, there are lieutenants. They campaign everywhere: in offices, in the faculty room, and there's a great deal of private telephoning.

If you have ambitions and you've already become a full professor, there's no place for you to go except to become a dean or ultimately a president. In our setup if you wanted to keep moving up you would cultivate the personal favor of the president. He entertains department chairmen in his home. He is very caste-conscious. You would have plenty of contact with him.

You would go about winning his favor just as you would with any boss. **You would have to gauge his need**

for adulation as well as his sharpness in recognizing when it's fake and when it isn't. In the case of our president, he used to be entirely aware when someone was laying it on. But after you have been adulated for a while, I suppose, it's easy enough to convince yourself that there is some truth to it. So now you need a heavier and heavier hand to satisfy our president's ego.

Then also, if you wanted to advance your career, you could help yourself along while serving on faculty committees. These are appointed by the president. You would take a position in a controversy only after the president had already made it clear which side he was on. Those who want his favor then know exactly what role to play. If certain members of the committee happen to be less than full professors and set themselves up in opposition to him, that would ultimately interfere with their careers. So they very seldom do.

After the president has made it very clear through letters, speeches, and so on, what he wants done, he finds that in general the faculty council will go along with him. The professors want to keep his goodwill. There's also a certain amount of apathy in the faculty council. Rather than taking an active stand, even to the extent of finding out all that needs to be learned, they tend to take his word for it and give him what he wants.

One of our recent squabbles concerned dress regulations for students. It's all a backwash from Berkeley. Our president would like to have students look decent but he feels it's not important enough to make a real battle over it. A faculty committee drew up a set of strict new regulations and this immediately touched off a wave of student protest. The president, I think very sensibly, said, "Let's think about this a while longer. We won't put them into effect right away."

He is very adept at this kind of maneuver. Confronted with an allegedly democratic setup, he very shrewdly appoints the kind of committees that will recommend what he wants done. Then if people object, he can say, "Well, after all, it's not my decision. It's the democratic decision

of the faculty committee." If the committee happens to act otherwise, he will sooner or later find a way to replace certain committee members or simply to ignore their recommendations.

That more or less sums up campus life. Things aren't the way they appear to be. You have the forms of democracy but they really don't mean much in practical use. You have absolute job security; I just don't know very much they could do to strengthen it. Yet the faculty argues as if the loser would find himself out of a job tomorrow morning. You have all this talk of scholarship; yet we have no way of forcing incompetent teachers off the faculty, and much of the so-called scholarship is meaningless.

You have professors wearing the academic pose and referring to businessmen as Philistines, although they themselves are small-minded and resistant to change. You have this pretense that everyone is a gentleman; we're never supposed to argue unpleasantly. But when I observe what happens in a gentlemanly fashion, I often wonder if they shouldn't change our university colors to black-and-blue.

CHAPTER 20

Discovery and Recovery

No one I interviewed impressed me more strongly than the man whose comments follow. Like all the others he had suffered and he had survived. But in the process, he had emerged as a man with a clear perspective on his job, his problems, and above all, himself. He had developed a clear set of goals for his career and his life, and his impressive success on the job confirmed that his experiences deserved special attention:

We were behind locked doors at a top-secret conference in the president's office at the department store. All the vice presidents and merchandising managers were there. The problem was critical and a decision had to be made: should we promote merchandise tied in with Roy Rogers, or should we tie in with Gene Autry? The discussion went on by the hour. Half a dozen buyers spoke. We evaluated customer appeal, promotional support, the royalties that Roy Rogers wanted *vs.* the royalties that Gene Autry wanted. You'd think we were deciding the nation's foreign policy. Everyone seemed so deadly serious.

But I couldn't take it seriously, any more than I could take seriously the whole business of selling girdles or men's hats. When I talked privately to some of the other executives, they said to me, "This is the typical nonsense. Just roll with it." Others took it very seriously. Their lives were built around such matters. It seemed to me then that a good 30 to 40 percent of the average executive's time is

like energy wasted on a treadmill. He exerts it on problems that have no significance. In addition to that, looking around me, I felt that in this company 90 percent of the effort was based on personal motivation to get ahead instead of doing the job.

I would come home at night with a feeling of frustration and depression. Is this what life is all about? Is this my role in life? Is this creative fulfillment? In the preceding seven years I had held eight jobs in what I call the commercial jungle. In each case after eight months or a year I'd reach a point where either I lost respect for the bosses or my behavior made it difficult for them to tolerate me any longer.

Here's one example I remember. I went in to the president of the company and started a discussion about what I considered the weaknesses in our operation. It started out as a calm discussion, but I was suddenly aware that the president was nettled. He showed increasing impatience with me. "We tried that," he said. "Take my word for it; it just doesn't work. I don't want to have to go through all the same pains again." My rebuttal was, "I don't know who tried it but I want to try it." Then I made a statement, "Maybe this company is not going to grow as fast as I want to grow." He said, "Well, that may just be so. Maybe, Frank, you'd be happier elsewhere. Meanwhile you can use the office and the phone." Famous last words. And I was out looking for another job, over and over again.

All during this period I was kidding myself that you could be a nice guy; that people will roll with you and work with you to accomplish the job; and so on. I was very naive about backroom politics and what goes on. I knew nothing about the power of personal motivation and how it can change people's actions almost unconsciously into what I call "antihuman behavior."

After moving through so many jobs for so many years, I had come to recognize that job changes were a critical area in an individual's life. Yet at one company where I was privy to all top management decisions, they treated the question of hiring and firing in an antihuman way.

They would send a cold letter to a man, special delivery, return receipt requested, saying, in effect: "In view of the situation in the field and your performance, you're out. This is not a personal reflection but merely a management reconsideration and reevaluation," and all that crap.

Back at the office they would dicker as to whether we should give him two weeks or three weeks separation pay. "Well, you know he was pretty nasty about this situation. Let's make it two weeks." They made offhand, arbitrary decisions involving people's lives.

I was frankly appalled by what I saw. I had a feeling, this can't be true; this is not reality. I had stretches of depression, which meant I was angry at something and didn't know what. My life and my work were meaningless. At that point I just didn't have an identity as to what I was doing or who I was or where I was going.

So I felt I needed to determine my own personal needs and to recognize what I wanted out of life. I had to reconcile my needs with the way the world around me demanded I behave. And I felt I couldn't do it without psychiatry. So at one point I looked for help.

I went to a psychiatrist and I am still going once a week right now. I found that I was identifying my boss with my father. This is an oversimplification. In all my jobs I was looking for some kind of pat on the back from the boss, really meaning, from my father. But praise and compliments don't exist in business. This was part of my problem.

The first thing I did was to root out the problem of job-changing, and after I began analysis I changed jobs only once more. I'll tell you how I happened to leave that last time because it was typical of my pattern.

I had a lunch session with the president of the company at which time I asked him his intentions for the company, because I felt that we were not moving; we were not planning for growth. And I drew blood. The president immediately questioned my loyalty to the company although there wasn't an instance that he could cite to indicate a lack of loyalty or a padding of an expense account. I had

become disloyal only because I questioned the rate at which we were growing.

The president had been with the company for over 20 years and I realized that his sole objective was merely to perpetuate the *status quo*. He had no desire for aggressive expansion. He had this empire; he was a leading figure in the industry; he had built the company. Why should he take risks? My questions brought this out in the open, and so I left.

Looking back, it seems to me that the only thing I did wrong was not to leave sooner. Maybe I put in three or four years too many. Then I realized that it takes a combination of circumstances: my being ready to make a change, the new job being available, and so forth.

I helped build the company from a volume of \$3,000,000 to not quite \$15,000,000. Of course I got no thanks for it. But I no longer look for the paternal pat on the back and kind words. It's not there to be given. It isn't in the makeup of this jungle for people to remain warm and human. Everything is against it. I no longer expect it. The only praise I expect is what I give myself. This is what I mean by operating on my own resources. I know what I am accomplishing. I know when I've done a good job. In my present position I have already accomplished quite a bit.

Someone like myself has a need to expand, to draw on creative energies, and feel you are spending 10, 12, or more hours every day of your life in a way that has some meaning and fulfillment. And without the help that I got from a psychiatrist, I don't know whether I could have found myself. After four years of analysis I have finally learned that it is possible for me gradually to change my working environment to suit me, rather than to capitulate and become "one of the boys." I have discovered that I can do this without alienating my supervisors or my bosses and at the same time without losing my effectiveness for the company, but as a matter of fact increasing it.

I have a very strong belief in my own intelligence and my ability to handle any situation. After some 20 years in

the business world, I've come to recognize that most people operate from a position of insecurity. They surround themselves with all kinds of defenses to shield themselves from a feeling of insecurity.

Just last week I ran into a problem. Our men are demonstrating a new product with a dramatic device that shows how our product will work in regular usage. But the containers are corroding. They are not functioning. We discussed the problem. The executive in charge of production and manufacturing minimized its extent. "It's not that significant," he said. "It's just one of those things. Some are faulty and some are not."

I presented the danger involved if we allowed this to go on, and I pointed out that we might be better off to pull back the whole unit. But his insecurities were obviously preventing him from leveling with me on the extent of this problem. He was defending himself because he was in charge of the project. He was personalizing the problem and taking my comments as a personal criticism. He was anticipating that I would be on his neck because the devices didn't work properly.

If I allowed this to go on and on, he would have found more and more reasons to defend himself. I wasn't criticizing him. In my mind was the best interest of the company. So I stopped the conversation and said, "Let me check with some of the men, and let's discuss it again tomorrow to see if we are making the right decision." I wanted to give him time to think about it. In the meantime, I called two of the men in the field and asked them to phone him with the facts of the problem. It was all aboveboard.

The next day, he came in to discuss it. The men had called him at my suggestion and now he had additional facts. He now had an excuse to change his position gracefully, without embarrassment and without losing face. It was a situation I handled well because I recognized that his insecurities were working.

I've learned to recognize that the more significant your contribution, the more insecurities you arouse in the people around you. The higher you get, the more difficult it

becomes to put through daring and unpopular proposals intended to increase the profits of the company. Because you are now working with other people whose very jobs and existence depend on perpetuating the *status quo*. When you are dealing with junior executives, you can get something through merely by showing confidence in your proposal. But when you get up on a level with managers and supervisors and presidents, they are fully entrenched. They are protecting their little empires and it becomes more difficult to find self-fulfillment. In order to survive you now must pay more attention to them as people.

You cannot allow yourself to take these situations personally. You have to stand back and see yourself objectively as a participant. This is a very subtle point. I try to function as if I were two people: the participant, and also the observer of the situation and of the two people in it, including myself. In other words, while I'm in a situation, I'm also off in the corner looking at myself, studying the other man and my own reactions to him.

When I now sit with executives to make decisions and we get to a point of disagreement, I feel myself able to observe as well as to participate. This technique enables me to minimize any emotionalism on my part that would trigger off something in the other guy.

The guy facing me is probably insecure and unsure of his position. Once he realizes that I am pretty firm about my position, his back may go up and he will become defensive. I keep my voice down as one obvious thing, but my words themselves are much more significant. Instead of saying, "I want to do this," I might say, "Can't we consider the possibility of this?" If I were to hammer away and the discussion came to a deadlock, it would further aggravate him.

There are techniques you can use. If I project to him a feeling that I am very confident on this project but I'm unsure about something else, like what to do with my 13-year-old daughter, I give him evidence of "failings" in myself. I demonstrate that I am human, that I can even absorb failure. In the light of this he will generally, al-

though not always, be more disposed to accept my business proposal.

Because these people, including the boss, have insecurities, it's easy to trigger an emotional reaction if you're not aware of what you are doing, which leads to no good. If you present an aggravating situation, your boss would just as soon eliminate this aggravation. So it ends up either in your dismissal or in elimination of your project. But you can maintain the self-discipline that it requires and avoid triggering this emotional, irrational response.

I believe that corporate tyrants can be handled. I worked for one. And when he asked me, "Why does Hertz walk in and tremble?" I told him, "Charlie, you scare the hell out of this guy." He said, "Why don't I scare you?" In other words, you can live with these guys if you face up to them and have confidence in what you are giving them. If you react to them in a truthful way, their insecurities are lessened in terms of you and what you are doing for them.

This man had a son about whom he was concerned and I'd ask him how his son was doing. Gradually, he began to come to me for advice. While our personal lives never crossed and we never met socially, I was able to bring his outside life into the discussion and in effect provide him with a kind of "instant therapy." It helped my whole situation immeasurably. It also built his confidence in me, which carried over to our business problems.

I didn't feed his ego. He may have gotten that satisfaction elsewhere. He didn't get it from me. I gave him respect. I showed genuine interest in his problems. I acknowledged his experience even when I was unsure about a decision he was making. This is a lot different from yessing a guy. I think it's wrong for me to be a "yes" man. For some people, it may be their only means of survival. If they said no, they would be out, and they don't want to be out. There are times when it just isn't important enough to say no. The issue is too small. But on the important ones, I can say no without threatening a man's security.

I don't think the answer is to toady to tyrants but rather to handle them. The way to do it is to demonstrate confidence in yourself. I don't mean bravado but rather a genuine feeling of confidence in the proposal you are making, the position you are taking, the project you are looking into. Back it up with sufficient evidence to give the boss the feeling that you know what you're talking about. And if he doesn't, you must make him feel safe that he can ask questions without embarrassment.

The phonies don't ring true. You can spot them. For one thing, they avoid making independent decisions. Most of the phonies want group participation in their decisions so that no finger can be pointed at them individually. The phonies live by false images. They give themselves a false importance. They insist that somebody they are calling get on the phone before they pick up their phone. They allow their phone to ring because their secretary stepped away; they won't pick it up.

They build images about their outside life which they think enhance their prestige. Like the vacation in Europe which was actually two weeks on a low-cost group charter flight. Some of these people are hardly aware they are playing a false role. They think it's expected of them. And not only phonies; a lot of decent, warm people encumber themselves with these fake ideas. They would be much better off and could live more simply if they would just relax about it. They would be much happier if they could rid themselves of this nonsense.

Unless they don't have anything on the ball, and many of them don't. But more do than those that don't. They can't survive through trials and challenges and reach the top levels unless they do have something on the ball. I like to believe that without a genuine creative contribution, success is not easy to come by.

I make a point of conforming outwardly. I dress very conservatively. There are areas of conforming which are not significant and in these, I don't mind conforming. But in areas of human relationships I am a nonconformist. I feel a concern for the employees who work for me. During

all those snowstorms off Lake Michigan, it was always up to me to call downstairs to Personnel and say, "What are you going to do about the snowstorm?" The personnel director would say, "All right, we'll notify the people that they can leave at three o'clock if they have a distance to go, and at four o'clock if they don't." I considered the welfare of the people working under me important to the operation of my department. The personnel people didn't; at least not enough to do anything about it.

Probably few personnel directors have genuine insight as to what employees require to function efficiently for the company and yet to satisfy their needs. In most instances their sole orientation is to keep the company from being screwed by unscrupulous, stealing, lying employees. They're not concerned with giving employees a feeling that management really cares about them and their welfare.

I think that a genuine expression of real concern and feeling toward someone else gives you a better chance of getting a positive response. But it helps only if you come through truly to these people and they have reason to accept your expression, your feeling, your interpersonal gestures to them.

One of the interesting phenomena of corporate structures is the seductive process that takes place. By the time you get up near the top, when you are making \$20,000 or more, you are caught and practically chained. You have a family already committed to values and tastes. You want to buy records. You want to go on vacation. You want your kid to go to dancing school.

They can't give you all the money they would like because six or eight other executives at other levels above and below must be considered. Even if you deserve a \$5,000 raise, they can't give it to you because it would disrupt morale. So they give you accident policies, major medical coverage, and so on. All these things add up, and in addition you get personal privileges over a period of time.

Many successful executives have abandoned themselves

to the whole fantasy including the three-hour lunches. They succumb to the myth that they have arrived at a level where they now have tenure and all they have to do is to keep their noses clean. You find yourself running a little empire. You enjoy the privilege of calling up and saying that you won't be in today. You indulge yourself. It's part of the whole seductive process. After eight or nine years of this, you find yourself fairly well hooked by bonuses and profit sharing on top of the salary. In such circumstances it's easy to understand why so many men lose their sense of values. They don't know what's important or they think the wrong things are important.

Going back to the Roy Rogers incident, what really was it? Nothing more than a bunch of guys who took some old films and put them on TV. They were making cowboy hats and kids' toys simply to make some money for themselves.

Today I wouldn't take a thing like that personally. I wouldn't feel that they were trying to involve me in a inane and insane venture. Today if I happened to find myself a part of it, I would participate. Today I don't think that selling furniture to women is more or less significant or insignificant than selling Gene Autry hats to little boys. That's the way it is. It's there. You do the best you can. I look upon it very impersonally and in that way I'm able to participate. I try for a quality of detachment. Not the detachment that comes from saying, "This is so ridiculous that I just won't take it seriously." I take it very seriously. It's the job I have to do and I want to do it well. But it's not the meaning of my life and I don't expect to find the meaning of my life in it.

Psychoanalysis has proved very helpful to me. It doesn't solve all your problems but it gives you an insight into yourself without which I don't see how anybody can operate successfully. I have the feeling that for most of my life I have been operating at 30 to 40 percent of my potential. I feel I have a long way to go in terms of using my actual creative energies.

I remember a conversation with a vice-president at the department store. We had just finished a big project. It

was after hours one night and he said, "Frank, when you finish a thing like this, what kind of a feeling do you have?" I said, "One of great accomplishment." He said, "Gee, I envy you because before it's even finished, I am already thinking about the next one. I just can't allow myself to enjoy a feeling of accomplishment."

I remember feeling tremendous pity for him. Maybe ten years later I realized what he meant: for survival, you can't permit yourself the luxury of relaxing after you have accomplished something. To keep your energy generator going you must constantly provide yourself with self-criticism. What's next? What do I do next? How do I do it better at all times? It was a brief conversation; funny that I should remember it after all these years.

But in those days I didn't know how to tap my inner resources whenever I needed them. I am now learning how to do it. I look forward to more and more of me being unloosened, and more and more of my dark corners lighting up, so that I can more freely express myself.

I feel that my future in the business world and with my family will blossom and grow as I am able to call upon more and more of what I have within me. I feel that I will make genuine and perhaps unique contributions to the business world. I am not depending upon settling into my secure position, winning so-called acceptance and praise from others.

I expect that my job will pay me well and increasingly better as I go along. I expect to be able to operate more and more independently so as to be able to fulfill my need to feel creative. Eventually I hope to get above it all. I hope to become vice-president of the company, and eventually president.

I now also feel that if I am out, I am not down-and-out. That is, I know exactly how I will move and where I will go and what I will do. So there isn't a dark, frightening void ahead.

My personal life and my job are now so completely interwoven that I dare not attempt any separation. I alone must decide how much time to put in at my desk on new

plans and product proposals, how much time to spend out in the field with the men, how much time to spend at meetings, and how much time to spend at home with my family.

I am aware of the contribution I must make to the company needs and to my personal needs. The fact that both are wrapped up together actually makes me more effective in each area. There's no point in my coming home to my family with a feeling that I messed things up at the office or left in the middle of a meeting in order to get home for dinner. I can't come home unhappy and expect to turn on the switch and become the happy daddy and husband. I can only come home and be at my best with my family if I find satisfaction at the office. And the reverse is true.

How to reconcile my office and home needs is a very delicate thing. You have to feel your way through it. You make mistakes and you try to correct them. As a matter of fact, the big thing is the striving rather than the actual accomplishment because too many of us never really achieve that accomplishment. It's the striving which brings meaning to life.

CHAPTER 21

From Monday to Friday

ONE cannot read—or hear at first hand as I did—these stories of pain, struggle, anguish, victory, and defeat without being profoundly affected. Is this the reality of executive life in America of the mid-sixties? Is this the ugly truth that lurks behind the raucous laughter in the bar car on the 5:37 commuter special?

I believe it is because not a single executive of the several hundred with whom I talked could recount a life of relative tranquility. Apparently not even in the ivy-covered halls of Academia, as you saw in chapter 19, can men escape the violent struggles which seem to characterize our time. "No man is an island," said John Donne in his 17th-century *Devotions*, and in the 20th century we must add, "The jungle is everywhere."

In *Survival in the Executive Jungle** and again in this book, I have written only of executives simply because I happen to know them best. But let me not leave the impression that I believe cutthroat infighting is limited to executives or that it is in some manner a result of our business economy. Destructive hostilities and savage competition characterize every aspect of our society. Do they not exist also in government, in the learned professions, in the arts, in the labor unions; indeed, even among the clergy? So who among us can cast the first stone?

I am under no illusions as to the kind of men who rule in many corporate positions of authority. Some seem to

* The Macmillan Company, 1964.

act like wild beasts, tormenting those under them as fit subjects for their prey. To those whose ill fortune it is to work for such superiors I express sympathy and understanding. Certainly such situations are inherently unbearable and if yours is one, your answer must lie in finding a better position elsewhere.

But if you cannot change such a situation, I believe you can gain control over it until the moment you are ready to leave for an alternative. You can avoid provoking a climax. You can avoid sharpening the hostilities of your superior until you are ready to go at a time of your own choosing. You need not be tossed about like a leaf on the raging ocean. By skillful handling you can win time to search for something better or at least more bearable.

Most corporate situations of this type, however, are not doomed to disaster. They can be improved and you can improve them. I am convinced that the executive under fire can handle almost any situation successfully, if you define success as holding onto your job until your situation improves or you find a better position.

You cannot change the boss. You will accomplish more than enough if you succeed in changing yourself even a little. You can do that if you are willing to make the enormous mental effort necessary to see and understand the pattern of your personal relationships.

Unfortunately, however, not many of us seem able to do so. Few among those I interviewed could honestly admit to their own shortcomings and to their own partial responsibility for creating their private executive hells. When I pressed them whether they had provoked arguments with their superiors, their usual answer was that the boss was impossible; nothing they did could have changed things. Only occasionally might they admit to some minor indiscretion which irritated him. Almost never did they recognize their own inner drives, to which the boss reacted like the sound of chalk scratching across a schoolroom blackboard.

You yourself while reading their experiences have already recognized some of their provocations and hostil-

ities. Your temptation, like mine, is to say, "He should have done such-and-such." Advice and counsel, however, are more easily dispensed than accepted, particularly if they involve an understanding of another man's needs.

We know, for example, that everyone, including you, me, and your boss, likes to be heard. We have opinions on everything and we want to express them. But we forget that the boss similarly has opinions and he wants to be heard. Like most people, he wants to say his piece before he'll listen to ours. But we don't always give him a chance. Why? Since we know that people appreciate a listener, why don't we listen to him? The answer is that, consciously or not, we are preoccupied with our own concerns, not with his. We find it virtually impossible to place ourselves in his position and to consider him, his problems, and his personality. So we talk when we should be listening, in an effort to impress him—or ourselves—with our own ability.

Our problem is similar when it comes to the admission of our errors. Seldom will we admit to an error in our judgment. At first we "don't see" our errors. Only after sharp and pointed questioning would the executives with whom I talked eventually concede their mistakes, albeit grudgingly.

At this point they would present their standard alibi. They insisted that their jobs would be endangered if they admitted an error. Never did they recognize that by insisting on their rightness, they were in effect telling the boss that *he* was wrong. I would ask them whether they thought the boss liked to admit errors any more than they did; this had not occurred to them. They lacked the ability to project themselves into his viewpoint. They did not see that he was a human being like themselves, with the same strengths and limitations, and that he, like they, did not want to suffer a "loss of face."

We hear it said that Orientals are concerned with "loss of face"; yet it seems to me that this concern is no less applicable to our own society. No man will willingly damage his opinion of himself. Tell a man he is a fraud, an

impostor, a liar, and you will hurt him deeply. But convince him that it is true and he will be a broken man. His righteous image of himself has been destroyed.

The human personality displays an incredible ability to protect itself against such damage. It will distort the facts and turn events upside down to avoid damaging itself. And if it cannot, it will simply blank out the incident as if it had never occurred. You might call it a sort of mild amnesia which represses experiences too painful for us to accept. Men will go to extraordinary lengths to prevent "loss of face."

Analyze the typical dismissal meeting between executive and employee. The boss has decided to fire an employee. He tells him why; inevitably he must be critical of the employee's performance. To protect his image of himself, the employee cannot accept that he has failed, so he turns things around and criticizes his superior for bad judgment, unfairness, and perhaps incompetency to boot. It is the boss who is at fault, not he. Is it any wonder that the boss rejects his comments out of hand? The boss is no more willing than the employee to admit to his own shortcomings. So nothing is accomplished except the exacerbation of mutual hostilities. No wonder some executives soften the blow of dismissal with kind words to the unfortunate employee in an effort to avoid having him "lose face." No wonder executives are so reluctant to dismiss anyone, however justifiable the action may be. They themselves don't want to "lose face" under the bitter blasts of the discharged employee.

Many executives find it difficult to imagine that the boss is motivated by the same insecurities which shape their own lives. When, however, you study the careers of the noted executives mentioned in chapter I, can you conclude differently? Perhaps the only difference between the average executive and those at the very top is the degree of their driving, overwhelming motivation. Indeed, it is this overwhelming need to prove themselves to themselves that brought them success in business, if not personal happiness.

Because many of these men are, not so far beneath the surface, intensely insecure men, they have fashioned elaborate devices to assert their dominance in the hope that these will make them secure. They become, in their own eyes at least, infallible and self-righteous. Some become blustering, domineering, sadistic bullies who can feel secure only when they have destroyed everyone else.

It goes without saying that such men are not easy to live with or to work for. Too many men in too many corporations spend their working lives in terror of such superiors. Many of them simply endure their torments while they pray for a better tomorrow. Or they change jobs hoping to find a more congenial atmosphere elsewhere. They rarely do. Or they toady to the boss, demeaning themselves in the process. Their fawning behavior seldom satisfies their superior. In too many cases it only encourages his contempt, which leads to their eventual dismissal.

Sometimes when they find themselves working for a corporate tyrant, they say to themselves, "I will go only so far and no further. I'll give him what he wants only up to a certain point but beyond that, he can go to hell." That certain point may be a particularly distasteful assignment which they regard as a public indignity; one more blast of his merciless criticism; or whatever. But it always comes eventually.

When it does come, they want to quit but they rarely do. Months or years of giving the boss "what he wants" at the expense of their own self-respect have so damaged their opinion of themselves that they now doubt their own worth, their own ability, and their own value in the executive job market. They stay where they are until they are fired, or they quit and go through the same ritual fire dance all over again in another company. Each time they become a little bit more unsure of themselves, a little bit more cynical. It is painful to see.

My own conviction is that the troubled executive can often improve the character of the relationship between the boss and himself. Personal relationships are not fixed and immutable. They can be altered by skillful and sensi-

tive handling, which begins with an understanding of yourself. When you're clashing with your superior, the person to look at first is yourself. What have you said to provoke him? If the relationship has begun to deteriorate, at what point did the deterioration begin? Can you recall what you said to him at the time?

How do your words sound to you now? Repeat them to your wife, and notice whether an angry tone suddenly creeps into your voice. It's remarkable how we unknowingly repeat the tone as well as the words of a conversation of months before. Did your words insult the boss, even though you "didn't mean it that way"? Did you present your case in such a way that if the boss accepted it, it could only mean that he was wrong and you were right?

And why did you say what you did? Were you motivated by a genuine desire to do what was best for the company or rather to let the boss know what you thought about him and his "damn fool ideas"? If so, is it any wonder that he reacted as he did?

How easy these questions are to ask, but how difficult to answer! I recall one interview in which 60 to 90 minutes passed before the executive could come to the point of admitting that perhaps he himself had contributed, even in small part, to his problem. Likewise, you cannot expect to find answers easily; all of your hidden defenses will conspire to prevent you from seeing your share of the problem.

Then, after you have appraised your own behavior, look at the boss. What else does he want from you besides work well performed? Probably unknowingly he wants you to make him feel more secure or, at the very least, not to threaten his opinion of himself. What the boss really wants from you may not be at all what he says he wants. He may ask you to analyze one of his projects but what he really wants is a compliment from you. If you decide it's a bad idea and you tell him so bluntly, you may soon find yourself looking for another job. Nor do you accomplish anything by saying yes to him when the honest answer is no.

There are ways to say things. They are not necessarily the first thoughts that come into your mind. Perhaps you can point out the positive merits of his proposal, balance them objectively with the negatives, and tactfully suggest how his project might be strengthened. The key word here is "tactful." Also, if the project has inherent merit, it isn't out of line for you to compliment him for it.

A few months ago in a speech to a management group, I commented that compliments of any kind were rare in business. I asked the executives, a high management group, how many had received any praise or good words from their bosses during the preceding week. None. How many had been complimented during the preceding month? One or two. How many could remember receiving any compliment from their superiors at any time? A few hands went up.

"Well," I said, "you resent the fact that your superior never compliments you. Why don't you compliment him once in a while? Doesn't he ever come up with an outstanding idea?" The answer was, "How can I compliment him? He's the boss. He'd resent it coming from me."

You see the problem. They couldn't put themselves into his shoes and understand that he too would like to be complimented if the tribute were sincere and genuine.

Tactful handling of your superior also requires an understanding of what the executive in chapter 20 called "trigger situations." These are specific irritants that provoke anger and resentment from the boss. Every human being can be "triggered off." You probably know right now exactly what situations or even words irritate your superior. The answer is to avoid creating those situations. But here again, it isn't easily done, because you may feel a need to irritate the boss, and it simply isn't easy for you to stop it. Once again, you can't change the boss but you can eliminate your provocations.

In all of these situations there are no simple answers and there are no standard solutions. Your boss, like you, is a very special human being and you can't look into a reference book and find Standard Solution No. 26 to get along with him.

But there *are* solutions. If there weren't, thousands of American corporate executives would have been out of their jobs a long time ago. Only you can find those solutions and they lie within your head. After watching hundreds of other executives contend with their problems successfully, I believe you can dig them out. Not by wishful thinking, not by constantly changing jobs, not by incessant complaining, but only by your efforts to understand yourself and by your own good judgment, can you survive from Monday to Friday with satisfaction and security.

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